

# THE GERMAN MENTALITY

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## INTRODUCTION

### CONTENTS AND AIM OF THE BOOK

WHEN at the beginning of 1939 — with the world still full of “appeasers” — this book was first conceived, it was the author’s aim to make it understood, as widely as possible, what “Hitlerism” really meant, that it was not the craze of a group of terrorists, but the general German state of mind, and that the “Fuhrer” and his gang were a product of the people, truly reflecting the German mentality. Secret re-armament, the accumulation of food reserves, a gradual alteration of the whole industrial, agricultural, and financial structure of the country, indicated what was going to happen. The experimental use of new weapons in Spain, and the terror applied against the civilian population by the German expeditionary corps, foreshadowed the recklessness of the intended new warfare. A description of the measures tentatively applied to the German Jews, and of a refined “law reform,” introduced to cover the suppression of opponents by imprisoning, torturing, and killing them, and to reward covetous Nazi aspirants with the confiscated possessions of the victims, was intended to warn the reader how the German mind envisaged the New Order. The attitude of the average German toward the enforced “return” of Austria, the peculiar “diplomatic” methods of Munich, and the onslaught on Czechoslovakia, were eloquent of the degree to which the Hitlerisation of Germany had progressed.

The publication of the book was delayed by the outbreak of the war. Before the first edition was ready, the outrages of the “Herrenvolk” in Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France, had surpassed all earlier examples, and had proved the reality of what many non-Germans had thought to be unfounded conclusions and dismal prophecies. Then came the seizure of Yugoslavia and Greece, and the invasion of Russia, with all the concomitant phenomena of indescribable human baseness.

For all that has befallen the world since 1933, there are still many people who adhere to Burke’s famous saying with reference to the French Revolution, that “you cannot indict a nation.” They point to the fact that at the last free poll for the Reichstag Hitler had no more than 44 per cent. of the voters behind him, and remind us of the many thousands of Germans who have suffered and perished

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in concentration camps. But all this is beside the point. Those would be right, indeed, who regard it as futile to indulge in "hair-splitting discussions on the German mentality," if nothing more than the drafting of an indictment against the German nation were the purpose of this enquiry. Its real significance appears from the fact that not only the temporary measures of military and political warfare depended on a solid notion of the German mind, but that the conditions of peace and, indeed, the whole design of Germany's position in the post-war world must be based on it. In particular, the great question of German re-education cannot be solved without a clear understanding of what certain superficial thinkers choose to call "merely a problem of positive morality."

Hatred and revenge are not suitable means of winning the peace, and it would be neither useful nor rational to propagate a new kind of anti-German "race theory." But it is quite another matter, carefully, and *sine ira et studio*, to scrutinize an undoubtedly existing abnormal state of mind of the German nation, and to ascertain its causes and effects. Every politician, every soldier, lawyer, or merchant is aware that he must endeavour to be fully acquainted with an adversary's aims, impulses, and methods. In war and peace alike you must be able to look at matters with your opponent's eyes, and to reflect with his brain, in order to apply the right remedy and forestall counteractions. You must know in every respect what your opposite part looks like from within. It is one of the greatest, and, indeed, most characteristic weaknesses of the Germans that with all their thoroughness and talent for organisation they could never manage really to understand the character, sentiments, and thoughts of others. Thus, in apparently trifling matters, they often provoked disgust and hatred even among those "kindred" peoples which they believed that they were treating with extreme consideration. We must avoid a similar mistake. Only an exact understanding of the German mentality can help us to devise adequate means of establishing, in the course of time, a more than merely technical security, and making these nearly seventy millions of human beings fit citizens of a New Europe, which, after all, inevitably has to include them. True, no contemporary writer can give a perfectly cool estimation of the German outburst. A wholly comprehensive and objective analysis of Nazism requires, even more than other historic developments, a sufficient temporal distance, all the more inasmuch as, at present, the Nazi movement cannot be reduced to its proper proportions in relation to those social and political currents of our period of which—as in the Russian case—full information is as yet lacking. But an attempt to explore and expound the actual mode of thought of the present German genera-

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tion, including certain details of their peculiar aberrations and ferocities, and to show why and how this mentality developed, may, at all events, provide some useful material for a future historian—quite apart from our own practical needs and the curiosity of contemporaries.

For nearly a century the rapid evolution of Germany, under the reckless leadership of a predatory Prussia, to the status of an industrial and military world power had been regarded from abroad with justifiable mistrust. For twenty-five years after Wilhelm II's accession to the throne, Europe had continually expected some surprise to come from Germany. Yet when the blow fell, in 1914, everyone and everything was unprepared. The same incomprehensible and inexcusable complacency was seen again after the Great War, though from 1932, at all events, it became obvious how repugnant was a peaceful and democratic development, not only to the former ruling classes, but also to the easily stirred-up German masses. Opponents of Hitler condemned to live in Germany had to note how after 1933 the forces for good were not merely silenced, but literally exterminated, how business and professional men, scenting the prospect of personal advantage, hastened to join in the new "national movement", how the officers of the law courts and the members of the administration became more and more discreditable in their behaviour, how the teachers of the Grammar Schools, proud of their qualifications as officers in the reserve, set an especially bad example of pan-Germanism, and how the workers, politically immature after their long suppression, and disappointed by years of unemployment, rushed with unreflecting haste into the *cadres* of the SA. They despaired when friends abroad continued to belittle all their warnings. Can we wonder that the man in the street, in London and Paris, remained unaware of what was going to happen, when even the majority of the foreign diplomats allowed themselves to be deceived as to the danger of the developments in Germany? Who did know the Germans? Who knows them even now? Not the average traveller who has spent before the war a few weeks in their country. Those who studied for a term at a German University, many years ago, or those who have attended international sports meetings, or have read a few German books? Or the journalist who once published his observations after a brief sojourn in pre-war Germany, or conveyed, more recently, his impressions gained in an interview with some war prisoners of either the arrogant or the cringing type; or who since has spoken to the bewildered people in the bombed and destroyed German towns? The Poles, the Czechs, the Jugo-Slavs, the Greeks, the French and Russians know

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them better, and even the people of some specially favoured and "protected" countries have acquired at least a partial notion of the German mentality. But the average Britisher and most of the Americans must confess that the arcana of the German mind, the secret sources and foundations of the German mentality, are not really much more comprehensible to them than the mentality of the peoples of Eastern Asia, of whose mystical minds so much is written and so little actually told, and whom, not very long ago, even educated people regarded simply as a vast yellow ocean,<sup>1</sup> without much discrimination between Indians, Chinese, and Japanese. Was anything really explained when it was stated that "the aggressor peoples in the East and West are of a subhuman nature"?<sup>2</sup> Indeed, is indulging in this kind of oratory, instead of exploring the historical roots of the differences in the way of thinking of these nations, any better than the ridiculous German race-theory?

The task of surveying the range of ideas of the average German and of obtaining a clear vision of his general and, in particular, his political mentality and educability, is no easy one, and the reader cannot be spared a certain amount of critical and ponderous discussion of recent developments, and of the behaviour of the different classes. Without such preparation the impression would be superficial, and the suggestions to be made in a later section of this book would not be fully understood. The mentality of an individual, the content and nature of his mind and his intuitions, the peculiar mixture of inborn and implanted qualities of spirit, sentiment, and character, can be visualised and described only by adding together a mass of characteristics and reactions. The same thing is even more true when we are trying to understand a people's mentality. Even the fact that such a thing as a peculiar national mentality exists can be proved only by empiricism. The task is especially difficult in the German case. The value of the Nazi polls and statistics was obviously nil. On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude from the fact that their 98½ per cent plebiscites were either dictated by fear and force, or falsified, or both, that there had been no Nazi majority at all. The exact methods of mass observation will be inapplicable in Germany for some time to come. As to the mentality problem—past and present—the results of interrogation would be dubious anyhow, and for obvious reasons. A recently-made proposal to psycho-analyse certain categories of war prisoners might, indeed, promise some valuable information. But as a means of ascertaining the mentality of the German people as a whole no short-cut methods can be applied

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 20, 197



## INTRODUCTION

There is no other way than the slow and thorny method of compiling material, from many spheres of human life, enough to furnish an epitome of the German mind, and to disprove the opinion that "national character" is largely an illusion. A glance at the foundations of German education, at the cultural, legal, political, economic, and social developments, and the conditions of life in Germany, yields valuable information as to why and how the mentality of this people differs so greatly from that of their neighbours. Gaps and apparent inconsistencies will remain, but a survey of the picture as a whole may well enable us to draw justifiable conclusions. It may provide us with an aspect of world affairs as seen from the standpoint of the German man in the street. From the way in which he reacted to certain events, and our knowledge of why he did so, we may deduce what his reactions may be in the future.

The author lived for more than fifty years in Germany under the Imperial, the Republican, and the Nazi régime. As a lawyer, a merchant, and the owner of a large estate, he came into close touch with all classes of the population. The material suitable for inclusion in such a book as this is only a fraction of that at his disposal. But it may be claimed that the picture of the German mentality drawn in these pages could not be improved by still more detailed observations.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL MENTALITY UNTIL THE SEIZURE OF POWER BY THE NAZIS

*The historical and educational genesis of the peculiar German  
mentality — Thoroughness — Austerity — Prussianism — The  
Bismarckian and the Imperial period — The Weimar Republic —  
The growth of Nazism.*

It is not the first time in history that a whole people has been seized with a sudden craze. Tolstoi, and others before him, pointed to the phenomenon long before anybody thought of Nazism. Behind these apparently unaccountable outbursts historical research has often been able to reveal the deeper causes—as economic or social pressure, or some fascinating dogma pronounced by a fanatic. There are three things that make the German case exceptional. Firstly, that it has come to pass in the twentieth century, in the middle of Europe, and amidst a people whom the world regarded as highly civilised. Secondly, the vehemence of the movement, which rapidly spread through all the strata of a nation of 65,000,000. And thirdly, the complete lack of any spiritual or ethical content in the movement itself, in spite of the most bombastic phrases. Thus the course of our enquiry is clear: an examination of the historical background must show us the soil in which the disease was able to grow, and lay bare the roots of the evil. Then, from the symptoms, we have to determine the nature of the illness. Only when the diagnosis is confirmed will it be possible to suggest how we can insulate, excise and heal the tumour, prevent a relapse, and protect ourselves and others from infection. Though in this chapter we shall deal mainly with the historical development of the German *political* mentality, our enquiry may elicit material which will help us to understand also other aspects of the German mind and conduct for discussion elsewhere.

The contention of many writers, that the mode of thought prevailing in Nazi Germany reminds one of the description which Julius Caesar and Tacitus gave of the Germans two thousand

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years ago, is certainly not of any "racial" significance. Apart from the absurdity of the biological inferences of the German "race-theory," which is now confirmed by all reputable anthropologists<sup>1</sup>—there is no such a thing as a pure "German race," dwelling between the Rhine and the Vistula, the present population of Germany is a European-Asiatic mixture of autochthones with foreign invaders who settled in the country after the migration of the peoples. Moreover, the descendants of German immigrants make up a great part of the present population of Great Britain and the United States. But though we may discard the racial explanation, we cannot deny the fact that the mentality of the Germans of to-day shows many astonishing points of similarity with those characteristics that impressed the Roman authors.<sup>2</sup> We see once more the "irritable and adventurous temperament," the *furor teutonicus*, and the cunning, hypocritical, and arrogant general attitude. We see how their primitive touchiness is still accompanied by a total lack of understanding of the feelings of others and by a stubborn unwillingness to listen to their arguments. We note the reluctance to settle matters in dispute by peaceful negotiation, the exaggerated cult of heroes, the all-pervading militarism, and the contempt for "haberdashers and shopkeepers." We find the same intolerance of opposition in their own country, the same harsh imposition of the German will on weaker foreign peoples, the same cruelty inflicted upon their victims, and, on the other hand, the same clamour when they feel themselves aggrieved. The nonchalance with which solemnly concluded treaties of friendship were broken, and international agreements repudiated, is an old story, and we find, above all, the deeply-rooted propensity to obey, without individual thought, in peace and war alike, the commands of a deified overlord. Those who were looking on from the inside when in 1932 the "clock was put back" in Germany, were struck by the evident feeling of relief, the positive enthusiasm, with which all classes hailed the new dictatorship, and welcomed the abolition of the democratic constitution of Weimar, denounced as being "alien to the German mind." Many personal observations made in those days and later, part of which only could be recorded in the following chapters, convinced the author that such sentiments were genuine and general, and that a great many even of those who stood apart for a time were dominated in their hearts by similar feelings, and would be soon won back to the old political ideas.<sup>3</sup> The group of the true German democrats, who witnessed with grief and despair the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 75-100

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 60

<sup>3</sup>Cf p 229

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collapse of their dreams of liberty and international reconciliation, was much smaller than was for a long time generally believed abroad

It is not mere literary trifling to trace in the mythical Siegfried, for a thousand years the ideal hero of the German people, some of these typically German traits. Indeed, the bold exploits of this legendary master of violence and blackmail remind us of many events in German history, up to Hitler's proposals to the Czechs and others to "guarantee" their countries on the trifling condition that they should first surrender half their territory to him.<sup>1</sup> Siegfried, endowed with enormous strength, made invulnerable by a bath in dragon's blood, and possessing the power of making himself invisible, was naturally superior to every adversary, and practically unassailable. It thus called for no exceptional courage, but for an amazing impudence, to challenge the weaker King Gunther to fight for his inherited kingdom, while—a significant nuance—Siegfried at the same time was seeking Gunther's sister Chriemhild in marriage. It is remarkable that—though the legend ascribes to Gunther's man, Hagen, who represents something of the Gallic mind, the indignant reply "that cannot be a prize which is already ours"—it was obviously beyond the horizon of the unknown writer of the "Nibelungenlied," and of the Germans, that this well-phrased answer might bring shame upon their hero. Gunther wishes to gain the hand of Brunhild, and, as he is not strong enough to withstand the test, Siegfried is quite prepared to help him by trickery. For what else is it when, concealed in his cloak of invisibility, he conquers Brunhild for Gunther? But this is not enough. The German hero must also deprive her of her virginity, before he goes to Chriemhild, on the very day of the double wedding, and the "piquancy" of the situation is enhanced still further by the fact that Brunhild was once Siegfried's betrothed, with whom he had exchanged rings. To make matters worse, the ideal hero, after stealing the girdle of his victim as a trophy, cannot rest until—again, a typically German trait—he has boastfully blabbed out the whole story to his wife, thereby providing the occasion for a dramatic finale!

It is true that a professor of German literature might raise some pedantic objections to this version of the Siegfried saga. And, of course, the love affairs of the Greek and Roman gods and heroes were often conceived in a similar spirit. What makes the whole difference is the smiling understanding of the ancients for the fleshly weaknesses of the Olympians. The Germans, in their lack of any sense of humour,<sup>2</sup> their inability to exercise self-criticism, and their

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 217.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 60, 146.

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bias toward mysticism, took their hero seriously, as may be seen from Wagner's musical dramatisation of the legend. That is why it is so significant that this celebrated national idol, praised in song throughout the centuries as an incarnation of the highest virtues which a German soul could conceive, should amount to nothing more than a miracle of muscular strength, without spirit or heart, crafty and regardless of others—a personification of the right of the strongest; though there have always been Germans — unfortunately, all too few — who had different ideals. It was Hebbel who said of the Siegfried idol: "He could not be separated from his dragon's skin, and—dragons ought to be slain"<sup>1</sup>

In the popular myths of the Germans—in all their heroic demigods, beginning with the Cimbri and Teutones, and the other destroyers of the Latin civilisation—in the half-legendary figures of the early Middle Ages—in Frederick Barbarossa, the Prussian Great Elector, the Soldier King, and his son Frederick II—in Bismarck, and the German heroes of our own times—again and again we are made aware of what is, perhaps, the most dangerous feature of the German national character: its deep and irresistible inclination for bellicose adventures, its worship of brute force; and many of the German historians have naively considered it their mission to glorify this traditional power-policy. "The pen lost what the sword had won," was Treitschke's frequently-quoted verdict when a diplomatist had failed to exploit a German victory to the utmost—though German diplomacy does not show many examples of such wise restraint! The phrase, incidentally, is also an example of the favourite trick of certain German historians and philosophers of this time, namely, to express a startling idea by the antithesis of some familiar quotation or theory. In our case a sentence from Byron's "Childe Harold" was so misused—"Politics regained what arms had lost"—and the very tendency of this distortion is significant of the contrast between the British and the German way of thinking.

But we must seek for a more convincing explanation than "race" of the peculiarities of the German mind. Unrecorded events, unknown conditions of life in the remote past, factors beyond the ken of the historian, may once have evoked the peculiar German tem-

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<sup>1</sup>Strangely, nobody seems yet to have noted that the legend of Siegfried's bath in the blood of the slain dragon—incidentally not a specific German motif—is probably a reflection of a superstitious rite, which would be a rather inappropriate symbol of old German "culture." For similar habits still exist among some savage tribes near Lake Rudolf in Kenya. Pitman ("A Game Warden Among His Charges") reports that "they indulge in the particularly unsavoury custom of bathing in rhinoceros blood, in order to acquire unlimited courage and strength."

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perament The reason why it has survived through the centuries, and still distinguishes the Germans from their neighbours, must be found in the long historical development of the German people in a political and social atmosphere differing from that of Western Europe, and less favourable to democratic evolution We cannot really say whether those traits of character which struck the ancient historians still distinguished in the same degree the Germans of the earlier Middle Ages from their neighbours It may be that, six hundred years ago, a similarly violent and predatory mentality prevailed throughout the whole of Northern and Eastern Europe, while matters were distinctly otherwise in France and in the South. We touch ground again, however, when we state that the investiture of the Hohenzolleins with the Electorate of Brandenburg in the fifteenth century was accompanied by a revival and strengthening of the old German spirit of conquest, which, from the time of Frederick William, "The Great Elector," was deliberately developed more and more along the lines of that mentality which is known as "Prussianism." It was an almost uninterrupted period of forcible expansion, under the iron rule of militarism and absolutist officialism, which attained a temporary climax under Frederick William I, the Soldier King, and Frederick II At the same time a primitive system of compulsory education, with former N.C.O.s as teachers, was introduced, one of whose principal functions was to inculcate, together with the A.B.C., the typical Prussian obedience. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that this harsh and austere régime initiated an amazingly successful period of industrial development in a country that was poorly endowed by nature. Prussia was an ideal foster-mother for the twin German characteristics — assiduous thoroughness and ability in organisation. Both qualities are based on the notion that the first essential of success is attention to detail, however trivial it appears to be It is this sense of detail, this often excessive pedantry, which, far rather than ingenuity, was fostered in the hard Prussian school. The privileged professions of army officer and the higher civil service were reserved for the nobility and a small ruling class A system which was hostile to individuality, and which allowed the ordinary man no opportunity of any sort of independent public activity, compelled those whose energies were not absorbed by their military duties to concentrate on industry or agriculture. Men who could not breathe in that atmosphere of rigidity and illiberality broke their hearts or emigrated The bulk of the population consisted of the right sort of material to produce those one-sided but efficient technicians, those tenacious manufacturers, and that hard-working class of peasants and labourers, of which

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Prussia was ultimately composed, and which became more and more a model for the other German States.

The great historical events of the last two centuries, which so decisively remoulded the mentality of her Western neighbours, had comparatively little influence on Germany. The standard of outward culture and scientific attainment was hardly lower in the Germany of 200 or 100 years ago than in the neighbouring countries. The educated class was, perhaps, a little smaller in Prussia than elsewhere, and at the court of Berlin attention was directed almost exclusively to military affairs. At a time when at Versailles, in Vienna, and in London, literature and the fine arts were cultivated, the "Soldier King," Frederick William I, economical, practical, and coarse, knew no better than to make the most learned member of his court a sort of Royal Jester for his Tobacco Parliament, while his artistic needs were satisfied by collecting a regiment of giants. The artistic interests of Frederick "the Great"—after a temporary enthusiasm for French literature and music—reverted more and more to the ballet. Not a few cases also are on record of artists of this period who left "Berlin and the Prussian States" because they did not feel secure in a country where, in striking contrast to the legend of the "Miller of Sans-Souci," a man could be imprisoned, or even beheaded—without legal procedure—if he had incurred the displeasure of a high personage. But this Prussian barbarity was in some degree compensated by the more praiseworthy conditions obtaining at the courts of some of the smaller German princes. One has only to mention Weimar, and some of the universities, where men eminent in science and the arts were quietly devoting themselves to their life-work. The eighteenth century alone contains the names of Beethoven, Goethe, Hegel, Herder, Kant, Leibniz, Lessing, Mendelssohn and Schiller, to mention only a few of those who gained for Germany the fame of a country of poets and thinkers. But the political evolution of the people proceeded in Germany along lines very different from those followed in Western Europe. At a time when Britain had long enjoyed a constitution and administration based on self-determination of the people and personal freedom, when in France the impulse towards liberation had broken loose in an immense explosion, when in America new democratic states were developing, in Germany despotism and some kind of bondage were still in force. The landed gentry and the corps of officers and officials ruled the German countries under the sovereignty of their absolute monarchs—in spite of a certain number of "Parliaments of Estates." No right of free movement existed for the greater part of the population. There was no right of assembly or association. Outside the

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greater towns the police and the powers of jurisdiction were in the hands of the estate owners. The Jews were restricted to their ghettos and excluded from civilian rights.

It is true that at the close of the eighteenth century the breath of freedom was felt also in Germany—by men like Goethe, Herder and Kant—and nowhere, indeed, did the longing for liberty find more beautiful and vigorous expression than in Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell"<sup>1</sup> and "Don Carlos." But it is true also that such sentiments inspired only a very small, intellectual élite of Germans. The pressure exerted by despots, great and small, was able to prevent new social ideas from gaining a "poisonous influence" over wider circles. For almost sixty years from 1789 the German masses never made any serious effort to liberate themselves from political tutelage.

The Napoleonic occupation, though it meant foreign rule and still heavier economic pressure for the Germans, did at least introduce a certain degree of democratisation, and greater individual freedom. The abolition of bond-service, the emancipation of the Jews, and a certain amount of self-administration in the boroughs, all had their origin in this period. Had they not been imported, it is probable that even these restricted liberties would not have been vouchsafed to the Germans until a much later date. And so, despite economic distress and much angry resentment felt against the soldiers of Napoleon's garrisons, the artists and scientists, and many educated people, especially in Southern Germany, remembered Napoleon not with hatred, but with a certain gratitude.

The wars of liberation were followed immediately by the reaction of the princes against the small liberties which, reluctantly and under pressure from the outward world, they had conceded to their subjects. For many decades the majority of the "alien" democratic institutions were again suppressed. Among the few exceptions was the emancipation of the Jews. The reconstitution of the ghettos would have made too bad an impression not only in Western Europe, but even in the Germany of those times.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, e.g., the imprisonment without trial for seven years of the well-known German author, Fritz Reuter (who wrote in dialect),<sup>3</sup> because he had expressed certain very moderate democratic ideas, throws a little light on the political conditions of the period, and on the unholy activities of Metternich's "Holy Alliance," that mutual insurance company for the suppression of freedom, which might well be described as a forerunner of the Anti-Comintern Pact of our own days. When, in 1848, some courageous democrats started a revolu-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 238, note 2

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 69-70

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 99, 219-220, 223.



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tion, it very soon became evident that among the broad masses of the German people the feeling for freedom had been effectually suffocated, and that there was little inclination to risk life and property for an unprofitable ideal good of which they had barely had a foretaste.

The policy of keeping the masses in a state of political ignorance, and of restricting the rights of the citizen to a level far below that obtaining in Western Europe, was followed until the collapse came in 1918. It is true that in theory anyone could attend the universities and become a priest, a doctor or a schoolmaster. But the government, particularly in Prussia, took good care that the instruction given in all departments of learning which had any connection with politics inculcated the official, reactionary views. Drastic selection guaranteed that only "politically reliable" men should occupy the professorial chairs. If for once a political black sheep should appear among the flock of white the administration did not hesitate to press for his immediate elimination. The textbooks were carefully selected with regard to the political opinions expressed, the lessons were thoroughly controlled, and special precautions were taken in respect of the teaching of history; it need not correspond with the truth, but it must be adapted to the fundamental purpose of moulding a docile, politically primitive people, proud of its rulers and their military achievements. The innumerable attacks which Germany has made upon her neighbours, from a thousand years ago right up to the conquests of Frederick II, the partitions of Poland, and the annexations by Bismarck of Hanover, Schleswig, Brunswick, Hesse, and Alsace-Lorraine—all these were falsely represented as noble and heroic achievements. Weak and morally suspect German princes were transformed into heroes. History lessons were little more than the enumeration of wars and battles, those which were lost by the Germans being disparaged or completely ignored, war-lords and military leaders were glorified, and the dates of every German prince were learnt by heart, while the great minds of the nation played a rather more modest part on the stage of official history. Lectures were on no account to be allowed to "degenerate" into giving the student a real insight into the social evolution of mankind. Everything that did not square with official doctrine was hushed up, and no instruction at all was permitted in respect of the achievements of the free nations in the field of democratic government and the parliamentary system. It is a significant example of tendentious teaching in the schools that the great French Revolution had to be pictured merely as an orgy of bloodshed and terrorism, the work of hooligans who had succeeded in overthrowing a weak monarchy. Little—almost nothing indeed

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—was said of the underlying social ideals of the great French Revolution, and the influence on the old world and the new of the proclamation of "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité." The absolutism of the kings of Prussia, "established as a rock of bronze," as Frederick William I had put it, required that Rousseau's famous doctrine of the "Contrat Social," which was the subject of world-wide political discussion during the whole of the 19th century, was to be touched upon very cautiously only in lectures on legal theory, and not even mentioned in the history lessons given in the grammar schools. The perfection in which the purpose of such teaching was achieved—to avoid the development of a well-informed and civilised people, but rather to evoke in youthful minds a state of political submissiveness and unprecedented, stupid self-sufficiency — is shown by the now officially adopted explanation of the refrain of the national anthem: "Deutschland uber alles." The poet's original idea, that the Fatherland should come before all other things, was gradually and intentionally misinterpreted, and transmuted into the notion that it was Germany's mission to rule over the whole world. As a result, the overweening upstart arrogance which expressed itself in Bismarck's jackboots, Wilhelm II's mailed fist, and the familiar elbowing tactics of the German rulers, found resonance in the sympathetic mentality of the masses, whose attitude became more and more comparable to that of a flock of geese in the autumn, which feel themselves to be so immensely strong and important that they will not even make way for a motor-car.

A second and even more solid pillar of the obedient and chauvinistic German mentality was the army. Every able-bodied man had to spend from two to four years of his life in barracks or on active service, and he remained in the reserve, the second reserve, and eventually the third reserve, as long as he was capable of bearing arms, being called up at stated intervals for the regulation exercises. Here the German mind received its last coat of varnish. Anything that had not been done by the schools was achieved in the army, the purpose being to form "a people in arms," living and dying in the "spirit" of a German corporal, and lacking any will of its own. The Prussian barrack-education is sufficiently well known to excuse us from describing it once again, all the more as we shall have to return to the theme later on, in order to disclose one of Hitler's peculiar methods of winning the hearts of his subjects.<sup>1</sup> But the German still remained under military supervision even when he was past military age. It was the function of strictly organised official ex-service associations, significantly called "Warrior Clubs," each group

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 61-64, 147-149

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under the leadership of a former army officer, to preserve the Prussian spirit. Abstention made a man politically suspect and exposed him to severe economic and social pressure.

The higher officials were recruited almost entirely from the sons of the privileged classes—the army officers, the officialdom, the nobility and the landed gentry. A process of selection corresponding to the social exclusivism of the body of army officers was exercised by the “feudal” student associations—the “corps”—from the ranks of which the leading officials were usually drawn. Under the pretence of “deepening the social and political education of their members,” they ensured, as a matter of fact, that no heretical ideas should penetrate into these circles. Nepotism and favouritism were the inevitable consequence of this system. On the other hand, a strongly homogeneous and conservative spirit was thus maintained, founded on similarity of birth and interests. Personal efficiency was considered less essential for promotion than political orthodoxy. A well-known Prussian Minister, when receiving young officials who had passed their professional examination with distinction, never forgot to stress the point that knowledge meant less to the State than political reliability—i.e., conservatism in the Prussian sense of extreme reaction. Only with great difficulty, and indeed very rarely, could an outsider, unless recommended by great wealth or special “connections,” succeed in attaining one of the higher positions in the Prussian hierarchy. The sons of working men were entirely excluded from this Garden of Eden, those of middle-class parents could hope only in exceptional cases to obtain appointments in the higher State administration or, of course, commissions as army officers on active service, and then they were stationed in small and remote towns, far removed from their objectionable relations.

Schoolmasters, professors, lawyers and merchants in a fair way of business, took the greatest pride in their status of officers in the reserve. For a man began to be a human being, so to speak, only if he was an officer in the reserve; no shopkeeper was regarded as worthy of this rank. A special “code of honour” obliged an officer, under penalty of being dismissed from the army, to avenge instantly, with the sword, an apparent insult. Until shortly before the Great War it might still happen that a, sometimes drunken, officer would strike down and kill a civilian without serious action being taken by the higher authorities.<sup>1</sup> So profound was the popular respect for an officer that no strong protest was ever made against such excesses. Prestige demanded that the officer should be “covered” in all circumstances, and, when an officer was the defendant in a criminal case, a military court was always held *in camera*, even in peace-time, in

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<sup>1</sup>As to duels cf pp 144-146.

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order that nothing should leak out. No civil court could meddle with these matters.<sup>1</sup>

It is almost impossible for a non-German to understand how completely everything was pervaded by the spirit of militarism. An army of former corporals, grown grey in the barrack-room milieu, occupied, after their retirement from military service, all the minor posts of the civil administration. Not only was their own "reliability" unquestionable—their presence alone was a guarantee of the political good conduct of their colleagues. They filled every office of the government, the local administrations, the police, the postal and railway service, spreading everywhere their familiar atmosphere, and impressing the public, their own relations, and the occupants of the reserved beerhouse benches, with their smart and dashing tone. Many foreign travellers of the older generation will remember their astonishment at the spectacle of some grim German postal official, in his proud blue and gold uniform, breathing rage and snubbing the patiently waiting public. In the villages young soldiers on leave, lounging about in their gay uniforms, and turning the heads of the local beauties, roused the envy of the country lads, who could hardly wait until they too were enrolled in the army. Every reservist who returned to his native village with the stiff bearing of the ex-soldier, and hung his coloured photograph on the wall of the best room, played his part in the preservation of the Prussian mentality on his election to the village council, and in the local "Warriors' Club."

The success of the Franco-German War of 1870, and the enforced unification of the German States under the Prussian king, furnished of itself, in the eyes of many Germans, a justification of the system of military despotism. Bismarck became a national hero. Enthusiasm for the "Reich" was great, and outweighed a certain opposition in the South, and in those new Prussian provinces which had been annexed only five years previously. Now the German people was presented even with a modern parliament, the "Reichstag," to be elected by the most liberal electoral franchise in the world—i.e., by universal and equal suffrage and the secret ballot. But nobody will believe that a statesman like Bismarck, with his utter devotion to the absolute rule of the kings of Prussia, would in fact have created a liberal political constitution. Actually the German Reichstag was condemned to impotence, since for all legislation the consent not only of the Emperor-King of Prussia was necessary, but also that of the so-called "Bundesrat." This parliament of princes' representatives was Bismarck's own highly ingenious invention. Its members were appointed, recalled, and instructed by the federal princes alone,

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 117, note 1.

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without any co-operation on the part of the so-called Parliaments of the individual states. To appreciate the situation fully it must be understood that there was in Germany no tradition which gave the Reichstag any actual predominance, and that the suffrage within the princes' parliament was so skilfully devised, that Prussia could hardly ever be outvoted. But—as a German proverb says—"a double seam holds best." It was therefore enacted by the Bismarckian constitution that certain paramount decisions—e.g., a declaration of war—were reserved for the Prussian Emperor-King alone. Bismarck's "most modern parliament in the world" remained, until the Great War, "a talking-shop with a handsome façade," in the rude but truthful words of a well-known East Prussian squire. The real power in the new Empire was concentrated in the King of Prussia. He was not only the highest War-Lord, but he was for all practical purposes the commander-in-chief of the whole German army even in peace-time, in spite of a few courtesy reservations in respect of the lesser "Sovereigns." He ruled, with the help of the privileged classes, as an absolute monarch.

The fact, too, that Prussia, like the smaller German States, had a constitution of its own with a Prussian Diet, did not, of course, involve any real restriction of the Emperor-King's power. The so-called "House of Representatives" in Prussia was elected by three "classes,"<sup>1</sup> the weight of the votes depending on the income-tax which the elector paid, so that the vote of an industrial magnate might outweigh the votes of thousands of his workers.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the poll in the elections to the Prussian Diet had to be held in public. One can imagine what this would mean, for example, in a rural constituency, and what an agricultural labourer had to expect if he did not vote as the squire wanted him to. Moreover, these strange "Representatives of the People" were controlled by a Prussian "Herrenhaus" consisting of members of the nobility, a few representatives of public organisations, and nominees of the king. Apart from the royal prerogative of instructing independently the Prussian representatives to the "Bundesrat," the king's approval of all acts of legislation was anything but a mere formality. This "modern" Prussian constitution, which did not grant any real political rights to the average elector, had been autocratically imposed by Bismarck, as a gesture, after the troubles of 1848. It had replaced an earlier, still more antediluvian "Assembly of the Prussian Estates," and it was still in force when the Great War started. The constitu-

<sup>1</sup>Even the right to vote for the borough councils was similarly organised. Appointments of burgomasters, town clerks and officers of the local police, and all decisions of any importance, required the approval of the government, so that in spite of the so-called self-administration of the boroughs, any local opposition to the wishes of the government was impossible.

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tions of the other constituent German States were all devised according to Bismarck's model.

The Prussian Emperor-King could play at his pleasure on the combined instruments of the Reich and the Prussian constitution. He was omnipotent in his own Prussian State. He could—and frequently did—employ his commanding influence to force his arbitrary decisions upon the smaller princes. His government could either employ the Reichstag, or could refrain from employing it, with the intent of checkmating it. How little Bismarck must have trusted the political judgment of his Germans! How cleverly he acted on the theory that they would content themselves with the shadow of a modern constitution, that they would not insist that actual power must be given to the Reichstag, that they would even accept the prehistoric political bodies in the individual States—if only they were given the outward appearance of a freely-elected Parliament of the new Empire! Vanity being satisfied, the average citizen, who felt that he could not expect to be allowed any real political influence, was quite prepared, as before, to do whatever the government wanted him to do, and he continued to show very little interest in politics, in spite of his excellent new suffrage.

The evolution of the German Empire, to all outward appearance, was amazing. The rapid extension of industry, the acquisition of colonies, the building of a large merchant fleet, and the creation of a strong navy, commensurate with the enormous army, marked the rise of Germany to world-power. Nevertheless, behind this splendid façade certain dangers were lurking, and Bismarck was the first to be aware of them. This man, Prussian to the core, brutal and crafty, holding that the end must always justify the means, unexcelled in his experience of his partners and antagonists, and possessed of unique knowledge of the political currents and intrigues of the past fifty years, had one characteristic which distinguished him from the majority of his most intelligent fellow-countrymen: he never allowed himself to be carried away, either by hatred—and he knew how to hate—or by his imagination. He was always aware of the existing limitations. He had never really been a "Pan-Germanist" or, as they called it then, an apostle of the ideal of a "Greater Germany." He had resisted the temptation to annex Austria, when everybody had expected him to yield to it. He was aware of the weak points of his creation, and he knew that only a strong and experienced hand could hold the "Reich" together. Consolidation was necessary, not further expansion. Solidity was needed, not brilliance. His absolutism originated in his mistrust of the judgment of the masses, and this contempt

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did not spare even the upper classes. But his bias toward autocracy did not blind him to the failings of a prince whose qualifications as a ruler he was unable to respect. He had expected that his son, for many years his first secretary and conversant with all the secrets of the State, would step into his shoes. Now, when the young Kaiser, whose sudden and dangerous sallies he had repeatedly rebuked, while Wilhelm had been still a prince, found himself in possession of that unrestricted power which Bismarck had built up on a different hypothesis, the founder of the "Reich" had to face the fatal dilemma of the monarchist who sees a monarch endangering the monarchy. It was more than mere disappointment at the fall of his own family-dynasty that aroused the uneasy doubt of the ageing Bismarck as to whether his work might not one day fall to pieces. It seems that in the seclusion of the Saxon forest he even questioned whether he had indeed done a service to Germany by "welding it together" into an almost absolute Prusso-German monarchy.

The annexation of Hanover, Brunswick, and Hesse, the oppression of the Poles, Danes, and Alsatians in the conquered provinces, the rather forcible inclusion of the reluctant South German States in the "Reich," had provoked much lasting resentment. Even when this had been to some extent appeased by a long period of prosperity, there were still many stout "Welfs," Hessians, and South Germans—and not only in the beer-cellars of Munich—who hated the "Prussian swine"; to say nothing of all the Polish, Danish, and Alsatian irredentists. The Prussians had disregarded the good advice of the Prince Consort of Britain's great Queen, to "Germanize Prussia instead of Prussianizing Germany."

Again, there was little enough left of the old Spartan austerity of Prussia in the new prosperous Reich. In this direction at least the "Prussian spirit," on which officers and officials prided themselves, had gradually become something very different. The luxurious habits of the officer-sons of wealthy parents tended to encourage the contracting of debts by their less fortunate comrades, and to favour the spread of gluttony and certain other evils within the officers' corps. While the conceit of the army officers increased almost day by day, their cousins, in their factories and offices, began to regard themselves as officers of the reserve rather than merchants and industrialists, while in the rural districts the old feudalism of the great land-owners continued unchanged. On the other hand, Socialism was beginning to spread among the masses which a monstrously expanding industry had crowded into the great cities, and the number of "Social Democratic" deputies in the Reichstag

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 287-289

increased. The membership of the Trade Unions of the factory hands grew rapidly, while the farm workers were still denied the right of association. The social gap between the manufacturers and estate owners on the one hand, and their workers on the other, was hardly smaller than that between officers and men in the forces. We may read a classic description of the Neo-Prussianism of the ruling classes and the slow awakening of the labourers in the political novels of Heinrich Mann, "The Subject" and "The Poor." But for all this, there was still no "political peril," and Wilhelm II's perpetual dread of an imminent revolution was totally unfounded. The masses were almost exclusively interested in the question of wages. The average German, if economically satisfied, was still willing to tolerate political tutelage. The excited threats of the Kaiser against "the mob without a fatherland," and his pronouncement at the ceremony of swearing-in recruits, that they must be prepared "to fire at their own fathers and brothers" if the word of command should be given, were outbursts of his hysterical fancy, more apt, indeed, to provoke than to forestall the imagined peril.

Still more stupid and dangerous were the wild speeches of the Kaiser in the sphere of foreign politics. It seems that Wilhelm II never appreciated the fact that foreign peoples were not necessarily intimidated by his boastful expansionist talk, his incessant threats, and his brandishing of the mailed fist,<sup>1</sup> but that they might become seriously hostile if once they were persuaded that Germany one day might carry her threats into effect. On the other hand — at least as regards the beginning of his reign — there is much that indicates that the Kaiser, excited to the verge of megalomania by his limitless power in his own State, and by the submissiveness of the masses whenever he raised the "mailed fist," simply succumbed to the temptation to brag of what he could do, without any clear notion that he was kindling a world war. His early pronouncement against the "Yellow Peril" — "Peoples of Europe, unite!" — points in this direction.<sup>2</sup>

However that may be, the dangerous effect in Germany itself of the bellicose speeches of the Kaiser was unmistakable. Year after year a more and more excited mood was manifested among the army officers, the students, and the captains of industry. The mixture of extreme nationalism and acquisitiveness which inspired the magnates of the armament industry and the big manufacturers, many of them related to the generals, was particularly remarkable. These gentlemen knew very well how to apply their extremist political

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 197-199, 201-203, 205, 222

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 197



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activities to the advantage of their social positions and their dividends. A war would bring them at the very least—besides enormous contracts for supplying the forces—the Belgian ore districts, and valuable new colonies—though their ambitions were still quite “modest” if compared with those of Hitler’s Germany. Again, a war would result in a “healthy bloodletting,” and help the captains of industry to get the masses, with their inconveniently growing claims, under better control. These groups—the same circles which afterwards, for similar reasons, fostered and supported the Nazi movement—were the financial backers of the “Kaiserlicher Flotten- und Kolonialverein” (Imperial Naval and Colonial Association), which, together with the officers on active service and of the reserve, contributed more than most people ever realised to the chauvinistic delirium prevailing in the Germany of 1914. Their watchword—thirty years before “D-Day”—was “Der Tag”—the day when war was to begin. A well-known foreigner, who was a guest at a banquet in an officers’ mess held some time before the Great War, recorded that, when the general mood had become animated, the officers and reserve officers, forgetting his presence, suddenly sprang to their feet roaring like demons, “We want War, War, War!”

War—against whom? France, of course, was still the “arch-enemy,” and her colonial possessions—not only in Morocco—were desirable enough. But in respect of the question, “Russia or Britain,” there was always much difference of opinion among the Germans, while nobody thought of fighting both at the same time. Bismarck had always been a strong advocate of friendship with the Tsars—which was not wonderful in view of his absolutist tendencies. Nevertheless, and in spite of his continuous and mischievous fulminations against the pretended influence of the English consort of Wilhelm II’s father, it would be wrong to suppose that Bismarck had ever really wanted a “show-down” with Great Britain. What he wanted was the strengthening of Germany’s position on the Continent, and even Wilhelm II’s nervous and ever-changing policy, notwithstanding his desire to acquire sea power and a colonial empire, was hardly ever definitely orientated toward a war with Britain, for which, in his inmost heart, he felt a salutary respect. More than one of his strange speeches emphasized the Anglo-German consanguinity—“Blood is thicker than water.” His frequently quoted declaration, “Germany’s future lies on the sea,” if we make due allowance for the inevitable boast, was hardly more than propaganda for a greater merchant fleet to deal with the increasing German trade, particularly with the newly acquired colonies. His building up of a large navy may be

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attributed—if not to mere vanity—to the desire to protect the German shore and the merchant fleet. It does not constitute, at all events, a serious proof of an intention to employ the navy for an attack on this country. Indeed, the reluctance, manifested during the Great War, to use the battleships, indicates the absence of a carefully prepared plan of the Imperial Government for an attack on Britain.

On the other hand, there has been, for more than a century past, a certain amount of talk in German newspapers and books of "British gold corrupting, and the British Empire conquering, the world." *The Times*, on its hundredth anniversary, quoted an article in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 28th, 1841, giving a provocative account of "the net with which England seeks to encircle the extra-European world." The majority of such utterances had their origin in the same mixture of envy and admiration as that on which the inferiority complex of Wilhelm II in respect of this country was based. Sometimes admiration prevailed—as in Fontane's ballad of "Consul Cunningham of Tulcahuar." Sometimes envy predominated, as in the case of the industrialists of the new "Reich," who angrily repudiated the description of Germany as "a country of poets and thinkers," a fiction which, they pretended, was expressly invented by perfidious Albion, in order to soothe Germany and to divert her activities from an inconvenient competition in world affairs. There was a strong tendency in these circles to turn the anger of the people against Britain, which was reproached with having, since the Napoleonic Wars, usurped all the best places in the world, leaving nothing for Germany.<sup>1</sup> Books were published with an outspoken anti-British bias—from "Germania Triumphans" to Dr. Eisenhart's fantasies, and Oscar A. H. Schmitz's "Land Without Music." Warnings were given in this country of the growing ill-will of Germany—e.g. by William T. Arnold in his book "Vigilans et Aequus" published 1903, and later by Sir Max Waechter and Dr. Nippold, and also by Frederic Harrison, in the *Spectator* and elsewhere. There are the observations of eyewitnesses, on the other hand, who assured us that no outspoken Anglophobia existed in the broad masses of the German people before 1914. The author, judging from long personal experience, feels justified in declaring that, at that time, hatred of Britain was mainly confined to the extremist groups.

What matters more, however, than the question against whom the greatest fury of the German chauvinists was then directed, is the progressive exacerbation of German bellicosity itself. Since the 'nineties a dangerous "Pan-Germanism," hostile to almost every non-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 52.

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German country, had been evolving under the aforesaid influences. It was disseminated by certain groups of nationalistic writers, professors, and grammar-school teachers—reserve officers, especially among students and young Germans of the “better classes.” Other agitators were the same people who were responsible for raising a first wave of anti-Semitism. We shall return in greater detail to both these movements in due course,<sup>1</sup> while it may suffice here only to state that at that time their effects were yet confined to the aforementioned groups and some other sections of the upper and middle classes. It was only after Hitler’s advent that the craze spread like wildfire also through the ranks of the working class. It is essential, for a critical examination of the German mind, and a proper treatment of the present German mass-psychosis, to take due note of this fact. What induced the masses of the German workers to submit to the worst militarism, to put up with the declaration of the Great War, and “durchzuhalten” until 1918, was not yet, in the first line, a spirit of chauvinism, but the traditional mass-conviction of inevitable subordination, and, secondly, the fact that they really believed in the official “truth,” that a malicious onslaught had been prepared by the “Entente Cordiale,” that the security of Germany’s ally, Imperial Austria, had been endangered by the Serbs, backed by Russia, and that German “honour” was involved. It was significant of this mentality that a member of the Social-Democratic party in the Reichstag—Frank was his name, and he was certainly no Pan-Germanist—was one of the first volunteers to fall in 1914. It is a fact, astonishing as it is true, that most Germans are still convinced that their rulers had neither wished nor carelessly caused the Great War. To this day only a few Germans have heard of the “Now or Never!” which, with typical “impulsiveness,” Wilhelm II wrote with his own hand on the draft of the note by which Germany granted full liberty of action to Imperial Austria and promised unconditional military support.<sup>2</sup> Very few ever got a clear notion of the criminal light-heartedness with which, in 1914, the many warnings of the German Ambassador in London, to the effect that Great Britain would actively intervene if Belgium were invaded, were disregarded by the Kaiser—precisely in the same manner as, twenty-five years later, Hitler disregarded Mr Chamberlain’s solemn declaration that it meant war with Britain if Poland was attacked. When the British intervention took place the shock was no less, in 1914, than in the parallel case of 1939; and both the disappointed deceivers had an easy task in making their German subjects believe in the “perfidy” of the British.

Even if one gives the Kaiser the benefit of the doubt as regards the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 52-54, 70-72, 75-82, 193-194, 199

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p 222

subtle question as to whether he caused the Great War through his "dolus eventualis" or "only" through carelessness—the historic crime of the German people remains the same in both cases, and their blindness is no excuse. Even if, eventually, they "stumbled" into the Great War, as the familiar phrase has it, they were guilty of a historic crime, inasmuch as they had meekly yielded—a hundred years longer than their neighbours in the West, and during periods when resistance would have been far less dangerous than under Nazi rule — to an education in political servility and to the stupefying tutelage of a reckless autocratic régime which had plunged them, again and again, into war. There can be no excuse that they had allowed the spurious Prussian "ideology" to be drummed into their ears until, caught by patriotic phrases, they had become a dangerous herd without a will of their own. This criminal, lethargic submissiveness, which had been visible already after the Napoleonic Wars, when the German people allowed even the trifling liberties introduced under French influence to be suppressed by the reactionary governments of the princes, again became obvious in 1848, as we have seen. Neither the reaction after 1815 nor the defeat of the revolution of 1848 would have been possible had a strong will to make an end of political oppression existed in the German people. The revolution of 1848 had already succeeded to a certain extent. The resistance of the king of Prussia was so feeble at first that the victory of democracy would have been beyond a doubt if the backward German masses had not refused the necessary help to the men who wanted to bring them political freedom. The Germans let them die in vain. If then the German people had been less indifferent, a victory for democracy might have changed the whole destiny of their country, and the history of Europe would have followed a different and, probably, a more peaceful course. But no serious attempt was ever made, least of all by their so-called parliaments, to gain for the people a decisive influence upon politics, and no strong temperamental outburst ever interrupted, for a further seventy years, the vicious circle formed by the militaristic power policy of the rulers and the inrooted obedience of the masses.

It is more than a phrase that every people has the government that it deserves, and that the people as a whole cannot repudiate the moral responsibility for the policy and actions of their administration. The statement of the historic guilt of the German people as a whole—in submitting, far too long, to an anachronistic feudal autocracy with all its evil concomitant phenomena and consequences—is also by no means purely academic. For although the conduct of the Germans in 1848, 1870, and even 1914, might be described as

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"the sins of their forefathers," yet the sons, from generation to generation, have willingly accepted their heritage; and, as regards the present generation and the German youth, this book will leave the reader in no doubt that they deliberately continued and, indeed, very much surpassed the evil traditions. It is this fact which marks the passage from the historic to the personal guilt of the Germans of to-day, and it further illuminates the position that — a month before the new war started — the Germans, on Hitler's order, celebrated with enthusiasm the 25th anniversary of the declaration of war in 1914 as a national holiday — just as their fathers had celebrated "Sedan Day." Of course, the practical conclusions which must be drawn from a moral verdict against a nation are different from those which would be adequate in the case of an individual, but this concerns a problem to be dealt with at a later stage of our enquiry.

The "nation in arms" assuredly did its utmost in the Great War. The fact that they were thoroughly beaten, in the end, because they could no longer cope with their adversaries' inexhaustible reserves of material and men, would not have been regarded as dishonourable by any reasonable man. It is significant of their peculiar mentality that the Germans were unable to accept the simple truth of their defeat. Thus, the legend of the "betrayal of the Fourteen Points" was invented, and willingly swallowed by the German people, in spite of the fact that President Wilson's peace proposal, which had been published early in 1918, had been immediately rejected by the German authorities and the unanimous vote of the whole German press. Albeit the German High Command itself had insisted on an immediate armistice, and Ludendorff had refused, even at the desire of the then Chancellor, to defer the request for a week, the story of "the stab in the back," also fabricated in order to save the prestige of the army and to satisfy wounded "honour," appealed to the German mind. The passage in Hindenburg's memoirs, which says with respect to the armistice: "as a matter of fact, we had not taken the step a moment too soon," is very little known in Germany. The Germans were unable to understand that the version of the defeat according to which the army was betrayed by a subversive movement was hardly to the credit of the German people as a whole.<sup>1</sup> No "socialistic intrigues" were responsible — or even co-responsible — for the loss of the war. It is astonishing, on the contrary, to note how rare and unimportant — in spite of the starvation from which so many died — were the riots in factories and dockyards. There can be no possible doubt that the revolution

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 32-33, 64.

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of 1918 was a consequence of the defeat—and not the other way about. The old discipline, the inveterate respect for authority, the feeling of subordination to a superior, endured right to the end of the Great War. Thanks to lying propaganda the Germans, in the spring of 1918, were still hoping for victory, and even just before the end they believed in the possibility of obtaining a “peace by negotiation.” Not until the total breakdown of the front were the delusions destroyed on which the then German “world-philosophy” had rested.

It was astonishing to those who looked at things from within that the reaction to the sudden collapse of the colossus with the feet of clay did not involve greater political clashes and more extensive destruction of life and property. All the ideals which the German people had so faithfully venerated for many generations seemed to have fallen. To all outward appearance, the might of the ruling classes, the officials, the squires and the captains of industry, had evaporated; and it seemed, in the autumn of 1918, that with the fall of the Hohenzollerns and the Imperial demi-god the power of militarism itself was broken. A foreigner could hardly appreciate to the full what all this meant to the German mind. The whole edifice of magnificent swank, in which, after all, the German people had taken such delight, lay prostrate—finished and done with. What next?

Some political writers have conjectured that the whole revolution of 1918 was a swindle, cunningly devised by the German generals, through the medium of faked “Soldiers’ and Workmen’s Councils,” in order, not only to pass on the blame for the defeat, but at once to promote their plans of rebuilding a strong army and to prepare for a second war—with the connivance of the new Socialist (but, as these writers say, nevertheless, Pan-Germanist and aggressive-minded) government. Few, however, who had any personal experience of the bitter anger and the bloody outrages of the Soldiers’ and Workmen’s Councils against the officers—and *vice versa*—would share the opinion that there had been any secret understanding; and there is likewise no sufficient evidence to stamp, wholesale, the Socialist originators of the 1918 revolution and the founders of the Weimar Republic as Pan-Germanist impostors, though the part played by some of the new rulers was indeed rather mysterious—e.g., when Paul Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by the “Carde-Kavallerie-Schutzen-Division,” and later, when the “Schwarze Reichswehr” was created. Others, who explained that there were two or more revolutions, are nearer the truth; at all events in so far as a number of heterogeneous groups took part in the upheaval almost from the beginning. There were Communist-Spartacist,

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Socialist, and Democratic-Republican elements. On the other hand, there soon appeared those sinister "Volunteer Corps," composed of adventurers of the most varied political opinions, from whose ranks, later on, a substantial part of the Nazi Party was recruited, and counter-revolutionists of different shades were numerous enough even among the troops and officials employed by the new revolutionary authorities.

However, disorders of all kinds, rash actions, counter-actions, and cross-actions of the lesser chieftains are the characteristics of every revolt, from which conclusions as to the intentions and the mentality either of the leaders or the masses cannot always be drawn, so that the continually changing and contradictory developments of the years of transition are to be touched on here only in so far as they are relevant to an understanding of the German psychopathy. Thus we shall resist the temptation to examine more minutely the intrigues of the political and economic groups, and the open or secret struggle of respectable mediocrity, within the changing governments, against reckless brutality and hypocritical malignity, features which are not peculiarly German. We must restrict the picture of the unsuccessful democratic attempt of the first years after 1918 to a few impressions which will indicate why it was bound to break down, and which may help toward the avoidance of similar mistakes in the future. A few special phenomena of the republican intermezzo will be discussed in later chapters.

So much is certain: the circles called upon to build a genuine democracy in Germany were not equal to their task. No wonder! The German people had never before learnt anything about the conditions and requirements of responsible political independence. It had always been accustomed to allow its destiny to be dictated from above. Now, when its former masters had crept into any bolt-holes they could find, there were no experienced democratic statesmen and officials who might have been able to build up a new State out of chaos, and to reduce things to order in an impoverished country suffering from the handicap of a defeated and brutalised army. It is not wonderful that those did not know how to command whose ancestors, like themselves, had been drilled merely to obey, and that the new democratic rulers often set about things in the wrong way. Before long, since they feared that they could no longer control the revolution, and that the chaos might increase beyond remedy, they chose the seemingly lesser evil of appealing for the help of the former officials, trained in administration and—in reactionary bureaucracy. Most of these were only too ready "to accept the altered position as a fact," and to return to their posts.

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Occupying the leading places in the ministerial departments, the former directors were presently to be seen at work again, officially as the "technical advisers" of the new ministers. It is true that some material loss was prevented in this way, and a certain degree of order was quickly restored. Nevertheless, it was not a fortunate inspiration. The Republic, trying to avoid the whirlpool of Charybdis, drifted down upon Scylla. In this check to a revolution which never penetrated to the roots of the old feudal order, in this compromise with the former ruling classes, lay the seeds of an early recrudescence of an anti-democratic and reactionary nationalism eager to undermine the foundations of the new Republic.<sup>1</sup> Had democracy then acted with only half the recklessness of Hitler, a Nazi State would never have emerged.

Weakness, not insincerity, was the real reason why the democratic government was exhausted by a few years of conflict with its united reactionary and Nazi opponents. The democratic politicians who occupied the ministerial posts neither could nor dared command in the tone which, for a time at all events, was still indispensable in Germany. Only a few of the ministers succeeded in forcing their way through the undergrowth of an officialdom afraid of all liberal ideas. The bureaucrats, who at first were extremely polite and submissive, and some of whom were even seriously bent on helping the new rulers, were only too quick to observe the weakness of the ministers, and they began, secretly, and then more and more openly, to joke about their new masters. At first they were full of respectful admiration for their "modern" ideas; then they began to point out "obediently" the "danger of too sudden and radical changes." First they "smoothed away difficulties", then too embarrassing orders were turned down "administratively"—that is, by way of sabotage on a grand scale. Passive resistance went so far that for years the Central Government was unable to induce many of the provincial and local authorities to remove the arms of the former princes from the official buildings, and replace the old seals by the Republican eagle. Still more significant is it that not more than fourteen, out of a list of more than eight hundred war criminals which the Allies had presented to the then Socialist German Cabinet, were finally brought to trial; and among them there was not a single general.

Now and again the senior officials, with a hypocritical show of deprecation, would inveigle the new chief into a particular act of folly. Not without satisfaction did they allow him to make a fool of himself in the new Reichstag before they came to his help. Some of the newcomers at the top were embarrassed by a certain sense of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 62-63, 324-325.



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inferiority, because they could not master the forms of society as readily as their advisers. Some who allowed themselves to be introduced to the circles of the bankers, big industrialists, and squires, were impressed and dazzled by the conventional façade of society and, often unconsciously, became useful instruments for the furthering of sinister political and private purposes. Moreover, unclean elements had risen into power here and there, and scandals, cunningly exploited, played their part in political life, though the prevalence of bribery and favouritism cannot be compared with what has since become a matter of course with the Nazis.<sup>1</sup>

All this, however, did not constitute the worst of the difficulties of the Weimar Republic. The hardships of the post-war period, which were felt heavily enough even in this country, were much more severe in Germany. For years the sons of the peasants and the agricultural workers had been absent from home, many of those who came back unimpaired did not return to the land, but gravitated to the industrial centres. The fields were neglected and exhausted, the flocks and herds had diminished. Industry and trade were in no better shape. For years the factories had produced only munitions of war. Machines were worn out and antiquated. Foreign markets were lost. The severance of parts of the German territory and the creation of new customs boundaries created other difficulties. The whole economic organisation had to be altered. Gold and foreign assets were lost. During the war good wages had been earned—and large profits had been made—in paper money; the Reich had incurred an enormous debt, and new bank notes had been printed in great quantities, in the sanguine hope that a conquered enemy would pay for everything. Now all that was needed from abroad for reconstruction had to be paid for in gold. But gold could be obtained only by the export of goods, and, apart from the technical difficulties just mentioned, the victorious powers were reluctant to accept German exports other than those which had to be delivered without payment on the reparations account. The demobilisation and the sudden standstill of all the war factories had already led to starvation, and had produced an army of workless much greater, and a mood of frustration incomparably worse, than that existing in any of the victorious countries. A newly-created system of unemployment insurance and other social measures were not enough to provide a quick solution of the problems of housing and feeding the workless masses. To see the situation, and the difficulties of the new Republican Government, in its true aspects, one must, of course, refrain from making a comparison with the so much worse con-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 161-167.

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ditions in the enemy-occupied Germany of to-day, but consider the position from the viewpoint of 1919

Discontent and social unrest increased. It puzzled the men that many things that during the war had become a matter of course among the soldiers were now suddenly once again regarded as crimes. There were children who had grown up without discipline; there were women who had been working in munition factories for high wages, and who now had to run their households on a small dole. Then there were the many proletarianised officers, and the sons of the former privileged classes, who could no longer find their customary place at the food-trough of the State. Industrial and agricultural wage movements and strikes were endless. A general strike brought the whole economic life of the country to a temporary standstill, and even its own followers fought a government from which the impatient had expected the immediate introduction of the golden age. In other countries, with politically educated and clear-thinking populations, it was possible, by energetic measures, to deal with similar phenomena. But the Germans were not politically educated, and for them individual thinking was a very unaccustomed and uncomfortable process. The German workers could not, and did not even want to understand that just at the beginning of their newly-won democratic freedom they would have to make sacrifices. "We might just as well have kept the old government! Think for ourselves? Why should we? The government is paid to do that! Under the old régime we weren't obliged to think!" That was about the gist of their political perceptions.

In Bavaria, in Brunswick, and some other German federal States, the administration had been temporarily usurped by Radical Communist groups, some of them partially consisting of anarchical elements and real gangsters. The central government, in this critical situation, apart from relying on a few detachments of the still undeveloped, small professional army, which was itself partly composed of reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements, knew of no better remedy than to cooperate with those "volunteer corps" already mentioned. Order was restored. But by that time the dread of any repetition of the Communist interludes provoked such a vehement reaction on the part of the terrified middle-class citizens, that henceforth the ground was thoroughly prepared for any reactionary movement, and the unscrupulous Nazi agitation against democracy that ensued—notwithstanding the fact that democracy itself was the strongest adversary of Communism—was able to strike root deeply and quickly. The extreme right-wing nationalists, many

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of them thrown out of their normal orbits by war and revolution, soon became more dangerous than the radicals of the Left had ever been. They opposed themselves with the greatest violence to the new democracy, and strove by all means to regain their lost position. The Volunteer Corps and secret organisations — "Consul," "Ehrhardt," "Escherich," "Oberland," etc.—professedly enrolled to fight the Communists in Germany, remained in being when the left-radical movements were defeated, and when those who in fact had joined up only to restore good order had returned to their civilian occupations. Because at the moment there was nothing in Germany against which they could fight, these rude and half-baked elements went abroad for the time being, like modern mercenaries, "to fight against Bolshevism." These new lansquenets, however, amongst whom there were still a few idealists, and the members of the other organisations mentioned, not only exercised a remarkable influence on the imagination of adolescents, but also, thanks to their manifold connections, on the reactionary circles of the former officers and officials, the nobility, the landed proprietors, and the industrialists, all of whom were sworn adversaries of the German Republic, and filled with the most venomous hatred of the new democratic order. It was no mere coincidence that the young adventurers returned from their "anti-Bolshevist" excursions just in time to take part in the coming "struggle for the Ruhr" — and thereafter to enter the cadres of Hitler's private army.

It was a strange fatality that the policy of the victorious Powers should have facilitated the operations of all the heterogeneous and destructive elements which, partly out of reactionary nationalism and blind hatred of democracy, partly owing to dread of Bolshevism, partly to naked egoism, or even to mere stupidity, united under the cloak of "patriotism," in order to fight the republican government. One can well imagine that the representatives of Belgium and France, with the aspect of the devastated towns and villages of their own countries in their minds, should have looked with bitterness at Germany, where no enemy had yet set foot; it was, nevertheless, impolitic to demand from the new democratic German government the fulfilment of claims which exceeded the economic power of the State.

It is not true, however, that the Treaty of Versailles was the main cause of Germany's economic breakdown, since the original, unrealisable conditions were later abandoned. But it is true<sup>1</sup> that the earlier "rigid adherence to the extorted conditions of peace" was an excellent means of propaganda for the nationalist agitators in

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 25, 64.

Germany Political writers have pointed to the fact that the subsequent concessions of the Allies eventually proved unjustified and useless, since Stresemann was revealed as a secret Pan-Germanist, who did not deserve the faith which Briand and others had reposed in him. But it must be remembered that, at the time of the conferences at Spa and Genoa, a genuine democratic government was still at the helm in Germany, though its position was already becoming more and more precarious. A few years made all the difference. When Poincaré, in the summer of 1920 at Spa, and then at Genoa, defeated the efforts of Rathenau to obtain some alleviation for Germany, and to secure a peaceful arrangement, Stinnes was the gainer—and Hitler. If Poincaré had been less harsh, if the victorious Powers had met Rathenau's wish for reconciliation, democracy might have been saved in Germany, the rapid growth of national fanaticism might have been checked, and Europe might—even at that time—still have been saved from National Socialism. Rathenau himself was by no means faultless. He had been personally responsible, to some degree at least, for the exploitation of Belgium during the Great War. But he had learned from his earlier mistakes. When, like Erzberger, he prided himself occasionally on the diplomatic skill with which he had played upon the existing discord of the victorious Powers, the extreme difficulty of his own position towards his nationalist opponents may have been largely responsible for such utterances. In any case, the "German peace" he meant was something very different from that which Stresemann had in mind when he used the same phrase. Rathenau was not aggressive-minded, and was no Pan-Germanist. He was a democrat, and had developed, in the course of time, into a good European. His declarations towards the Allies were honest. And so he was doomed to fall by the shots of fanatical nationalists, as Erzberger had fallen before him.<sup>1</sup>

More and more the nationalists were making themselves felt. The fact that they had remained in bolt-holes during the revolution had excused them from the inconvenient necessity of joining in the signature of the "ignominious Peace Treaty of Versailles." Now they exploited that fact in fomenting a first-class agitation against those who had shown the courage to put their signature to the Treaty, and who since then had laboured manfully to obtain some alleviation by agreement, instead of banging their fists bombastically on the table, like Stinnes, and offering a hopeless resistance. The nationalists adopted exactly the same tactics as those which had been applied by the German High Command in the armistice negotiations, when the liberal Chancellor Prince Max of Baden was induced to accept the responsibility, thereby enabling the generals to keep in

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 75

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the background and saving "the prestige of the army"—a service for which he was afterwards ostracised.<sup>1</sup>

After Rathenau's death the resistance movement against "the policy of fulfilment" took still stronger forms. The then Government, which consisted of honest and even intelligent men, who would have been quite capable of carrying on under ordinary circumstances, was unable to summon up the energy and superiority which would sternly have called a halt to the violent nationalist agitation, backed as it was by capitalists and industrialists. Even the socialist ministers became more and more afraid of being branded for life as unpatriotic cowards. Rathenau's fate was discouraging. His successors preferred, for the sake of a few miserable old guns and some secret factories,<sup>2</sup> to bear the reproach of dishonesty and ill-will from the Allied commissions which had to control the delivery and destruction of the German arms—and which already had been only too tolerant in their requisitions. It was by no means yet a real rearmament—but it was a beginning, although the ministers, probably, thought they were merely turning a blind eye on an innocent improvement of the equipment of the small peace army, which, as they were assured by the generals, would be unable to perform its duty of keeping order within the Reich if the restrictions of the Versailles treaty were "too literally" adhered to. Similarly, it began, little by little, with the secret drilling of a few volunteers and the setting up of some disguised new cadres, when the "Schwarze Reichswehr" was organised. The ministers in their deeply-rooted deference towards the military and their misunderstood "patriotism" simply could not find the energy to insist, against the unwilling generals and nationalists, that the obligations of the peace treaty, signed as they were, must be loyally fulfilled.

The new republican Reichstag, too, was not equal to its task. Its members, still unaccustomed to the high responsibility allotted to the representatives of the people under the parliamentary system, which had been adopted by the constitution of Weimar, often regarded forms more seriously than contents. The parties were splitting up more and more into small political fractions. The party leaders, many of whom were former secretaries of the unions of employers or employees, had greater experience of wages negotiations and popular oratory than of the problems of high politics. They, too, were no more inclined than the ministers to risk their popularity by backing what would have seemed a weak foreign policy.

On every side the fatal consequences were becoming obvious of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 25, 64, 249

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 42

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the former system, which, far too long, had kept the German people under tutelage, and estranged the best brains from politics. Everywhere the leading men were lacking in the common sense based on experience, and the authority backed by tradition, that would have furnished them with the indispensable strength to deal with the masses, which were always readily deluded by any slogan camouflaged with a patriotic colouring. As it was, the ministers did not dare defy public feeling, and employ their legal powers against the new chauvinism, although an energetic application of these powers would have forced the men who had been prominent before the revolution to scamper back into their bolt-holes. Instead of taking a strong line, the government yielded to the pressure of the fanatics, and took part in organising and "financing"—with the connivance of the then president of the Reichsbank, Havenstein—a semi-official "passive resistance" against the obligations accepted under the Peace Treaty.

When now, after twenty-five years—and what years they have been!—one looks back on these events with a cool and objective mind, the forces at work in the background become clearly visible. The picture reminds one of the German saying, "You think you are going to push, but you yourself are pushed!" Behind the "patriots," who were pushing a much too compliant government into a policy which led first to inflation and then to Nazism, there stood the wealthy industrialists, who had harnessed the chauvinist adventurers to their chariot—though in the misconceived belief that they could control the steeds at will.

The hopelessness of the unfortunate idea of obtaining, by defiance, in 1922, an alteration of the Peace Treaty, which the murdered Rathenau had previously failed to achieve by his policy of reconciliation, could easily be predicted. Inflation was already in full swing, with its concomitant phenomena of soaring prices and dearth. But the vicious spiral could still be regulated to some degree, although matters were complicated enough with respect to Germany's intricate position in the international economy. From the very moment when the "passive resistance" was promptly answered by the occupation of the Ruhr district it was obvious to every expert that the wide "hole in the West" would cause a financial haemorrhage which could not be met any longer by the familiar currency manipulations, but must lead to complete disaster, if the gap were not quickly closed again. True, the government—and, of course, the great concerns and industrialists—would get rid, by the rapidly progressing inflation, of their external and internal debts, incurred in marks, at the expense of the cheated creditors. But even this "advantage," gained at the

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price not only of Germany's reputation but also of the destruction of the greater part of its economy, did not mean very much, as far as the government and the people as a whole were concerned, in view of the fact that the obligations of the Peace Treaty could not be redeemed in paper marks. It appeared more and more clearly that, in the end, the great industrialists and some speculators would be the only big profiteers.

At first matters seemed to develop very well. National feeling was satisfied by the "courageous" sabotage actions of the revived "Volunteer Corps" and certain "heroes" in the Rhineland—and at the same time the "well-informed" captains of industry paid off all their debentures and other liabilities with cheap printed paper, thus filling their pockets in a style never dreamt of before. This, however, was by no means the whole story. The new inflation had opened many other ways of enrichment to the initiated.

The procedure was simple. First of all, you borrowed from your bank as much money as you could get, in order to purchase for your paper marks everything of real value that was for sale at home or abroad. The price was of no consequence as long as it could be paid in "marks." You could buy valuable machinery, or raw materials, houses, and land, as there were always people who, owing to the increasing dearth, were forced to throw away their heritage, or were impressed and deceived by the extraordinarily high prices which the speculators offered. You could purchase also, with the borrowed paper marks, foreign shares quoted on the German stock exchanges, or, at all events, shares of such German companies as possessed assets of real value ("Sachwerte"). The shares thus obtained could be offered as pledges to the banks, which willingly gave credit to "well-known customers" up to 75 per cent. of the daily quotation of the securities. By the time the bank bill fell due the value of the mark had fallen so low, and the price of the acquired "Sachwerte" had risen so high, that you could pay the bank, if not almost out of your waistcoat pocket, at all events by selling a small proportion of your purchases. But you could also obtain a higher credit from your bank on your pledged securities, according to the rise in their quotation, and repeat your profitable deal, on a still larger scale, for a second and third time. If, however, for once in a way the mark had not fallen quickly enough, the bank had to extend its credit, and, when the bill next fell due, the settlement was still more profitable. If you were an industrialist or export merchant, you also had an opportunity of using the borrowed paper money in order to finance your deliveries to foreign countries, and thus you obtained gold and credits in foreign exchange. For the heavy fall in the value

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of the mark had led to some temporary, though unsound, revival of German exports, a revival which was ruinous to manufacturers and workmen abroad. on account of its "dumping" effect, and also to the general body of German consumers, by reason of the progressive selling out of goods which resulted, and the scarcity in Germany of all kinds of commodities.

The interest to be paid on the borrowed money to the banks, however high, was of no consequence in such circumstances, and as the private banks rediscounted their bills at the Reichsbank, which, in its turn, printed the "money" in unrestricted quantities, the ring was closed. This went on for years. Gradually everyone got to know about the technique, and in the end there was hardly a greengrocer in Germany who did not speculate in shares—though these people were in a less favourable position than the capitalists, as most of them did not enjoy the valuable bank facilities, and thus were confined in their speculations to the "cheap" shares of inferior companies which they could afford to pay for in cash and which, of course, were the first to become worthless when the bubble burst. The whole country had been intoxicated at last. With typical German thoroughness the swindle had been carried on until the purchasing power of the mark had fallen to zero. Today it seems like a fairy-tale that in October, 1923, you received, for one U.S.A. dollar, 4,200 billions of marks. The joke circulated in Germany that an American who wished to change a dollar at a German bank had to wait for hours, and when he at length became impatient, the chairman appeared in his fur coat and top-hat ready to hand over the keys of the bank in return for the dollar.

For the big men the business had gradually lost interest when the value of the mark began to approach zero. They had feathered their nests, and the existing statutes restricting the possession of foreign currencies had so many gaps that there was scarcely one of these gentlemen who had not—often with the help of a foreign dummy, or by founding a holding company abroad—provided himself with the necessary bank deposits in other countries, and thus made himself "independent of the mark," as the phrase had it. Before the so-called stabilisation "broke out," bankers and other initiated financiers had already made their preparations to exploit the deflation by carrying on a new and profitable business of lending the newly-created "gold marks" at an annual interest of from 18 to 36 per cent. Nor were private persons alone in having to pay such interest in the period following the stabilisation. The boroughs were forced to borrow, at almost the same interest, the money urgently needed for salaries, wages, and social services, because the avalanche of paper



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money had suddenly become worthless, and rates, payable in gold marks, came in very slowly.

The great inflation, with all its consequences, not only did serious injury to innumerable foreign and German creditors; it also completely undermined the nerves of the people. While the big capitalists had accumulated immense fortunes, the workers had suffered and gone hungry, since the increase of wages necessarily limped behind the daily rising cost of living. After all, however, the average working man had not suffered a concrete economic loss, since even before the inflation he had possessed nothing. But the middle class was completely impoverished. Their savings, bonds, and securities had become worthless, not to speak of the magnificent shares in which the small shopkeepers and tradesmen had speculated so eagerly. Those who suffered most were those who should have been most effectually protected by the law — the minors. Their property, invested in the public funds, was lost, and the subsequent statutes of restoration repaired only a small part of the damage done.

It should not have been too difficult for a clear-sighted man to discover that the main inflation had neither been an inevitable act of God, nor simply the regrettable result of mere technical incompetence on the side of the "democratic" administration, or perhaps the work of the Jews or certain "outlandish speculators," as he was told—although some foreign financiers, especially those who had collaborated with the wealthy German originators of the matter, had been among the profiteers. The facts that the beginning and the termination of the great inflation coincided with the start and end of the passive resistance, and that the latter immediately broke down when the last trickle of gold had vanished from the treasury, should have evoked peculiar thoughts in the citizen about the resistance movement itself. If he considered that the inflation could at once be stopped, just when it had been at its worst, as soon as the gap in the West was closed and the necessary steps had been taken to control the outward trade and to prevent the efflux of capital, and if, eventually, he compared his own misfortune with the enrichment of the industrialists and the elimination of the mark-liabilities of the State, it should hardly have escaped him that the whole thing looked very like a concerted action of the government, the nationalist fanatics, and their wealthy backers. But there were few who made such reflections. The German philistine of that period had no reasonable notion, comparable to that which the man in the street in this country has since acquired, of the causes of currency variations and of the effects of "abandoning the gold standard" and returning to it. He had not the necessary insight to perceive the cunningly

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hidden intrinsic causes of his impoverishment. His anger was artfully directed against the "democracy" by the reactionaries and the Nazis. Democracy had "robbed the German citizens of their property," they were told, and had "left in the lurch the heroic German youth which had shed its blood in the sabotage troops in the Rhineland and the Ruhr." Democracy had again made "cowardly submission" to Poincaré and the French.

There was nothing left after the breakdown of the so-called Ruhr struggle but to resume the "policy of fulfilment." Two things, however, were achieved in consequence of the inflation: Germany's wealth was now concentrated in a few hands, and large new strata had become proletarians and suitable objects of political instigation. It was this destruction of a moderate middle class which, for all its political backwardness, had formed a strong factor of social order in Germany that, eventually, became of far-reaching political importance.

After an interval under the colourless Chancellor Wirth, Stresemann took the place of the murdered Rathenau. A few apparently peaceful years followed. The reparations figures had been reduced by the victorious powers to tolerable dimensions, and certain unduly onerous clauses of the Versailles Treaty were abrogated. But there was no longer a genuine democratic régime in Germany. Stresemann, who reaped what Rathenau had sown, had different political ideals. He was no extremist, and no reactionary in the usual sense. But he was no "good European," as Rathenau had been. Stresemann's political views were those of Bismarck. His aim was the re-establishment of a strong military power, the reconstruction of Bismarck's Reich, including the "German parts" of Alsace, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Baltic States; and, in addition, he aspired to German political and economic leadership in Central and Eastern Europe. The resumption of the policy of fulfilment was to him merely an unavoidable, temporary concession. It was not supported by an inner conviction of a moral duty to repair the damage done by Germany in a recklessly initiated war. The concessions made by the Allies to the Stresemann government came too late to save the German democracy, which was already dead, although the democratic forms were still grudgingly upheld.

A slow economic recovery began in Germany in consequence of Briand's policy of reconciliation. Credits from foreign countries poured in. The wheels were turning again. However, the German industrial magnates had not sufficiently realised that this time they were dealing with liabilities in dollars, pounds and guilders, and no longer with "mark credits" which could not be too hastily changed

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into "real values," and which, during the inflation, had repaid themselves almost automatically. So they did not cautiously reconstruct the German economy by means of the new loans. Money borrowed for short terms was lavished on risky new investments, and sometimes even misused for big speculations in stocks. Thus, when in 1929, after the collapse of the American boom, the river of gold dried up, and many credits were unexpectedly recalled, the effect on Germany was catastrophic.

But it must be clearly understood that the new economic breakdown had nothing to do with the "policy of fulfilment." The payments on account of reparations had been financed mainly by the foreign countries themselves, and the total amount paid by Germany out of her own means was smaller than the remaining credits from abroad. The clamour that the difficulties experienced after 1929 originated in the policy of reconciliation was merely another attempt on the part of the real culprits, the big industrialists and imitators of Stinnes, and certain bankers of the same kidney, to prevent the people from perceiving that the borrowed money had been gambled away or, at least, could not be realised in time, owing to their criminal libertinism. Apart from this, the shock was still further aggravated by the new loan policy which Dr. Schacht, not foreseeing the coming financial developments in America, had just inaugurated, in order to enable him, unhindered, to decide the right moment for a new German refusal of payment which he had in mind. It strictly forbade the contracting of short-term foreign debts, and thus prevented the German debtors from smoothing out some of their difficulties by replacing the bills falling due with new short-term credits. While some of Germany's biggest business concerns collapsed, being past all help, the bulk, after all, survived the blow, thanks to the moratorium which was eventually granted by the foreign creditors.

Meanwhile the German industrialists engaged in constructing a new political coalition between capitalism and extreme nationalism—with Hitler at the top. As long as Stresemann was at the helm they acted rather cautiously. As a former secretary of a big union of employers he was well acquainted with the mentality of the great manufacturers, and they in turn were aware of his intention to gain time for Germany's recovery as the preliminary to his intended new "German peace." They had, however, no great confidence even in Stresemann. He was too adroit a diplomatist, both in home and in foreign politics, and he had too good friends amongst the Liberals and the Democrats. In any case, it seemed good business to "get hold of this Hitler," who always needed money for his propaganda and his storm-troopers, and with whom

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one was on common ground in so many matters. True, his style and manners were not very fine. But, in the course of time, he might become even fit for society. He was serviceable at all events — eminently serviceable. They had in common with him, besides their chauvinism, above all, the hatred of democracy and all that smelt of Socialism. That was sufficient for the manufacturers of armaments and the other industrial magnates, to whom a democratic policy of international reconciliation and social understanding at home was thoroughly repugnant. They wanted to become “masters in their own house” again, and at the same time to obtain new armament orders from the State. Further, they were obsessed by a terrible dread of Communism, against which they were prepared to make an alliance even with the devil himself—and against which they believed they had found an incomparable ally in Hitler.

Stresemann was ill. With his death, which came earlier than had been expected, the policy of fulfilment received a mortal blow. Without him the mediocre minds in the Government found themselves more and more powerless to withstand the roaring gale of Nazism. The violence of the agitation—with the slogan “Germany awake!”—surpassed everything previously experienced, and it must be admitted that Hitler’s demagoguery was attuned with astonishing subtlety to the primitive instincts of his public. Since those days we have all become familiar with the hysterical verbosity of the Goebbels propaganda, and have learned to estimate the seditious insinuations of the Nazi verbal gymnasts at their real value. Then, however, these wild speeches were something new, and their unprecedented vileness produced an enormous effect upon all the rowdies of the post-war period, old and young, and the frustrated masses. The “drumming” of propaganda was a simple matter in the case of an audience which had already assembled with the unanimous longing to bawl out their anger in unison. Thus, the most contradictory things and persons could be arraigned or libelled simultaneously at political meetings—the Government and the “system,” the Capitalists and the Marxists, the Democrats and the Communists, the Jews and their friends, the Freemasons and the Ultramontanists. Every category of private hatred could be satisfied at one blow. In the beer-cellars of Munich, where Hitler rehearsed his propaganda, a refined system was developed of attacks on all and everything, with chimerical promises of golden days if only the Nazis were masters in Germany. The watchword, “Down with the whole system!” was bound to gain a hold, not only upon the naive souls who are always impressed by the statement that “it is the government’s fault,” but especially upon the detraqués, adventurers, and malcontents from

the former privileged classes, who now formed the "intellectual" wing of Hitler's followers

Actually, all the talk about the "System Period" was absurd; for during the "fourteen years of German humiliation," so incessantly denounced, the reins had been held by governments of the most disparate political tendencies. There had been no "system" at all—and this very fact was one of the main causes of Germany's misery and the breakdown of the Weimar Republic. Hitler, indeed, had no reason to complain either of the Constitution of Weimar, which guaranteed him freedom of speech, or of the weakness of the governments—and the courts—which permitted him to misuse this liberty by pursuing his inflammatory propaganda. His S.A. men could impress their "opinions" on their opponents by thrashing them in the streets and in beer-cellar brawls almost without let or hindrance. Bloodthirsty speeches could be made with impunity, "battle songs" inciting to political homicide—such as the famous "When the blood of the Jews drips from our knives"—could be roared during processions, while the government and its individual members could be reviled in public in terms which cannot be reproduced. A spirit of hooliganism governed the Nazi meetings. According to the German practice of the time, malicious public slanders and libels in the Press were not severely punished, and even if the court, after long and painful discussions, imposed a modest fine on a slanderer, what did he care? Both the circulation of the newspaper and the reputation of the "intrepid" editor had profited—and mud sticks. The floods of calumny, the instigations to murder which characterised the period are almost unimaginable. "If you will not be my brother I shall crack your skull!" In many cases, after such preparation by the Press, the slandered person was found lying dead in the streets; the culprits remained unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the atmosphere in 1932. Here indeed a man of superior calibre was needed, a real statesman, able to thwart the poisonous demagoguery of the Nazis, to win over the masses, and to rouse them for the defence of a free democracy. He would have needed to be a man capable, at the same time, of making it plain to statesmen abroad that it was urgently necessary, in the interest of their own peoples, that they should cooperate as closely as possible with all the really democratic forces in Germany, and give them a full measure of economic and political help, in order to check the Nazi menace and save the peace of the world. Such a man, however, did not exist in Germany, either in the former Chancellor Brüning or in any of the democratic and socialistic politicians. The anti-Nazi members of the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 75-77, 111, 119-120, 145

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government had not even noticed the danger before it was too late. It seems hardly credible that the ultramontane Minister Bracht, the man responsible for the internal security of Prussia, at a time when the Hitler agitation was at its height, could find nothing more urgent to do than to issue his famous "gusset decree," ordering that all bathing costumes must be reinforced in the lower part of the trunk! That, to all appearance, was the main concern of His Excellency at a time when the very existence of Germany was at stake

It is by no means an excuse that the democratic members of the coalition cabinet were unable to carry their motions against their colleagues. They had not been quick enough to appreciate the fact that the basic democratic idea—that the will of the majority of the people, and not force, must be decisive—always presumes that the electors and their representatives are really free to express their will. They had failed to prevent in time the wholesale intimidation of all opponents of the Nazi movement. Shrinking from bloodshed, they could not bring themselves to draw the proper conclusion from their own opinion—right or wrong—that the majority of the people was not in fact pro-Hitler. When at last they tried to act, in order to stop the coercion by the Hitler guards, and to oppose force by force, it was already too late. What could the so-called "Iron Front," hastily recruited from various leftist political groups, do against Hitler's well-organised praetorian guards? A few more beer-cellar fights only helped to prove anew the "heroic courage"—and the superior savagery — of the S.A., and brought many waverers into the camp of the stronger Nazi battalions. In fact, a very great part of the German population, with its powers of resistance reduced by political ignorance, the fevers of the Great War, the revolution, and the inflation, was already hopelessly infected by the Nazi poison. Almost all classes of the nation, however, albeit for the most different reasons, were united by one feeling: a passion of embittered resentment against the Republic of Weimar. The masses, excited yet exhausted by the political conflict, were conscious of one common and instinctive requirement—to do what was ordered by the "Leader," without having to think and worry any more. The time was ripe for its moral surrender, and that happened which was bound to happen.

And the army? General von Schleicher—inconsiderate, brutal, intriguing and ambitious, Hindenburg's confidant, and the chief of the Reichswehr, the man who then wielded the greatest power in Germany—was primarily working for rearmament. Secret preparations in the factories and the recruiting of a "Schwarze Reichswehr"—begun, as we have seen, as early as 1921—had meanwhile been con-

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL MENTALITY

siderably speeded up. As a temporary expedient Schleicher even welcomed the drilling of Hitler's private army under the command of Rohm.<sup>1</sup> The Republic meant nothing to him. For him it was all one, whether a constitutional chancellor led the government, or whether the ultramontane Brüning, or that man of many parties, von Papen, was at the helm, who once had arranged the first meeting between Hitler and the representatives of German capitalism in the villa of the banker Baron Kurt von Schroder in Cologne, and who, now had been made chancellor by Hindenburg—in flagrant violation of the constitution—with the task of appeasing Hitler. But Papen's last-minute attempt to bring about a coalition on equal terms between the Nazis and the conservative diehards under Hugenberg, and to avert a complete surrender of power to the "sansculottes" who afflicted the old Field-Marshal "with nausea," as he had put it himself, came too late. Hitler persisted in his demand of becoming Chancellor with unrestricted powers. General Schleicher had calmly watched the game. Like the big industrialists he had, for long, been ogling Hitler, and, like them, he still believed that he would be able to direct or, if necessary, to overthrow him again.

The victory was virtually already won when Hitler proceeded to seize power by working his last great bluff of "snatching Germany back from the abyss of Communism," an abyss before which, at that time at all events, she certainly did not stand. There had no longer been any real danger of Communism in Germany since the Communist intermezzo had broken down which, ten years earlier, after the murder of Kurt Eisner, had terrified Bavaria. The number of Communists in pre-Nazi Germany was generally over-estimated in consequence of the wild Nazi propaganda. In the great industrial centres there were, of course, many convinced adherents of the Communist and Syndicalist movements. But it is quite certain that in 1932 the majority even of the registered members of the German Communist Party were far from clear as to what they really desired. To most of them the words Moscow, Red Front, Communism, Syndicalism, and Bolshevism, were more or less all synonyms, and meant nothing more than a social dreamland. What they wanted in earnest was not a radical communist régime, but the abolition of unemployment, increased wages, social security, and an end of the housing shortage—in short, those social improvements which were equally desired by the Socialists and by many reasonable people of democratic persuasion. If there had been a really commanding personality on the democratic side, many of the so-called Communists

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 244. Both Schleicher and Rohm were assassinated in the "purge" of June 30th, 1934.

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could have been easily won over. But there was a certain amount of noisy Communist agitation, the unscrupulous nature of which was apparent from the fact that the Communist representatives in the Reichstag were stupid enough to assist the Nazis by supporting their motions of censure, thus aggravating still further the precarious position of the few Socialist ministers still in office. There had been occasional illegal strikes, some processions of Communist demonstrators with raised fists, and a number of street fights, while certain orators of the Communists tried to compete with the Nazis in sneering at all other parties and at the Socialists in particular. Nevertheless, all these were comparatively small matters. There were no mass riots and there were no more indications of an imminent Communist upheaval than existed in other countries. If, notwithstanding, a Communist attempt to overthrow the Republic had been made, it would have been easily crushed. For the ministers were weak only in respect of the Nazis, not in their dealings with the Communists, and the Trade Unions were prepared to stand by the constitutional powers if it should prove necessary.

A few personal observations may throw some further light upon the Nazi propaganda-lie of the "abyss of Communism," and may also indicate how the public administration was misused in order to aggravate the artificially evoked unrest by unfounded "warnings." I had been acquainted for more than ten years with the owner of a large and well-managed agricultural undertaking in the vicinity of Berlin. This man, a stout democrat, and a member of Pastor Niemöller's congregation, had long been a thorn in the flesh of the Nazis, as he vigorously repulsed any attempt to interfere with his own political freedom or that of his employees and workmen. The Nazis responded by abusing him as a Communist and declaring his estate to be a "breeding-place of Communism," although, as a matter of fact, there were no Communists at all in his employment. On the evening of the Reichstag fire, when our friend was in Berlin, he received a telephone call from his wife on the estate, to the effect that the local sub-prefect, a man known to be under Nazi influence, had ordered watchmen to be posted at once, as Communist gangs were marching up in order to set fire to the estate — a strange proposition, since the owner was himself declared by the Nazis to be a Communist. Although he was satisfied that there was no truth in the warning, he could not refuse to comply with the orders of his local authority, and made arrangements for a junior overseer and a mechanic, armed with fowling-pieces, to patrol the farm during the night. The senior overseer of the estate, who would certainly have known if there had been any danger, had also



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gone to Berlin that evening, in order to keep an appointment with a friend. Naturally, nothing happened, and both the watchmen, having fortified themselves with alcohol, tottered about the farm for some part of the night in the best of spirits and then went to sleep. After the alarming telephone call the landowner had set out for the restaurant where the senior overseer had arranged to meet his friend, in order to send him back to the estate. Neither on the District line, nor in the underground, nor in the streets of Berlin, was there as yet anything strange to be noticed on this ominous evening. In the large beer-house, near the Friedrichstrasse railway station, the ordinary cheerful activity prevailed. The overseer was amazed by the news of the impending Communist attack, and expressed his feelings with rude and rustic emphasis, however, he went off at once in order to receive the Communists according to their deserts. The landowner's wife drove in to Berlin by car the same night. On the Hamburg to Berlin highway nothing was seen either by her or by the overseer—travelling in opposite directions—of the officially announced "Communist gangs," for the simple reason that there were none.

The Communist attempt from which Germany was "saved five minutes before midnight" by Hitler, the "abyss" so brilliantly illuminated by the Reichstag fireworks provided by the ingenious pyrotechnist Goering, was nothing more than a magnificent Nazi bluff. The trivial business of having to hang the innocuous half-imbecile, van der Lubbe, who was needed as the central figure in the tragi-comedy, did not greatly trouble the actors. For the man was indeed hanged. The whispers to the effect that he was smuggled away to South America showed very small knowledge of the mentality of the Nazi chiefs, who never allowed a "potential traitor" to live. One of the highest judges in the German criminal courts remarked bitterly to the author that he only wished that he might be entrusted, after the disappearance of the Nazi régime, with the new trial on the resumption of the proceedings with regard to the Reichstag fire. This gala performance, however, not only had the expected effect on public opinion, but it also removed the last feeble opposition of Hindenburg and Schleicher. Moreover, there is some reason to believe that the balderdash about the "Communist abyss" was partly responsible for the fact that France declined the timely Polish invitation, made by Pilsudski before he willy-nilly compromised with Hitler, to proceed to a joint intervention. The refusal precipitated a disaster which, even then, could still have been averted by immediate and energetic action. Obviously, too, not a few diplomats of other countries allowed themselves to be impressed by

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Hitler's bugaboo of an imminent Communist revolution in Germany, which could be prevented by him alone.

Indeed, the mad idea of cajoling the Führer, and of "defending, with the help of the Nazis, Western civilisation and the world's economic order against Bolshevism" was by no means confined to German capitalists. Apart from this, most European statesmen were still possessed by the complaisant idea that the issue at stake between democracy and totalitarianism was merely "a question of different ideologies," and by their sacred dogma that "interference with the internal affairs of another State" was once for all taboo. Six years of Nazi barbarism had still to elapse before, for the first time,<sup>1</sup> it was officially stated in this country that Nazism does not deserve the name of an "ideology"—in the usual connotation of a not *a priori* immoral philosophy—and before, slowly and cautiously, a high international diplomacy began to admit that there are no hard and fast boundaries to be drawn between the "external" and "internal" activities of a government.

Nobody would doubt that a man may, and even must, lawfully "interfere," if his neighbour's wife is brutally threatened by her husband; and, for a layman, it was difficult to understand why Germany's neighbours should be, morally or politically, prohibited from doing the same, *before* the Nazis were able to seize power and carry into effect their outspoken threat to exterminate many thousands of perfectly innocent German citizens whom they regarded as "enemies of the State" merely because they were democrats, or Communists, or Jews. The theory of non-interference obviously becomes a dangerous trick of dialectic when "internal" terrorism in a State implies an immediate danger to its neighbours. The notorious mentality of the Nazi rulers and their followers, and their bloody manifestos, had clearly enough foreshadowed the immense perils to the civilisation of the whole world of a coming German reign of terror—long before the first of Germany's neighbours was invaded.

But all the world looked on apathetically when von Papen, cutting short his own brief interregnum as Chancellor—one can almost see his sardonic smile—presented, as on a salver, Germany's whole power to Hitler. While S.A. men saw to it that "no noisy opposition disturbed the unanimous manifestation of the will of the German people," a well-known Berlin lawyer, a faithful Catholic, and a man unable to tell a lie, described to the author, while still under the impression of his terrible experience, the screams of the political prisoners who were flogged to death with steel rods at the Alexanderplatz police station.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 266.

## CHAPTER II

### THE "SPIRITUAL" CONTENT OF NAZISM

*The Leader Principle—The pretended aims—Pan-Germanism—  
The Hitler Bible*

#### I

HITLER called his enterprise a "movement," in order to emphasise its "totalitarian character and dynamic force" and to distinguish it, on principle, from a mere political party. He contended that Nazism was something "spiritually perfectly new"; and the fact that, in an epoch which we thought to be enlightened, a people in the heart of Europe which we had believed to be civilised could be carried away to such an unprecedented degree, seemed to confirm his claim. But doubts increased the more insistently as one endeavoured to perceive the spiritual and moral content behind the showy façade. Both German opponents of Hitler, who applied themselves to a careful study of the Nazi literature, and unbiased enquirers abroad were alike disappointed in their efforts to discover anything but empty phrases at the bottom of the mystery. Most of them confessed that they were unable to understand how Nazism, even if the description of it given in Hitler's book was accepted at its face value, could rouse a reasonable people to such a pitch of excitement. They were right in both their negative conclusions—neither in Hitler's nor in any other Nazi text of the movement could there be found a solid "spiritual basis"—nor was the German people a reasonable one.

According to Nazi regulations every German was bound to buy and—what is worse—to read the standard works of Nazi literature, and, above all, *Mein Kampf*. A "National-Socialist Confession of Faith" and a ready-made *Weltanschauung* (World-Philosophy) were supplied to every *Volksgenosse*. But, in spite of the supplements, it was explained at the outset—a wise measure of prudence<sup>1</sup>—that not everyone was able fully to understand the Nazi philosophy. A perfect understanding required that you should have a "genuine German mind"; and here already we begin to approach the core of the matter. A purely "German mentality"—which is, in the opinion of experts, a psychopathic mentality<sup>2</sup>—was indeed an indispensable precondition for appreciating the "spiritual value" of the movement and of Hitler's synthesis of it. The true

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 58, 85, 107, 108

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 228-229

blue élite of those who, without flinching, plodded their way right through the Nazi bible might confidently claim to have stood the threefold test of the genuine Nazi mentality, they were distinguished by the qualities of semi-education, semi-civilisation, and fanaticism. For only a half-educated reader could stomach the innumerable historical, philosophical, and biological lies and distortions enunciated by Hitler with such incredible arrogance, and only a semi-civilised fanatic could swallow without disgust the accumulated hatred and intolerance—quite apart from the fact that only a completely uncritical addict of Nazism would fail to perceive all the contradictions within the book and between it and other manifestations—and deeds—of its author. But the undeniable fact that a large proportion of the German possessors of the book have never managed to read their “Kampf” to the end does not, unfortunately, prove that they did not possess the requisite mentality. The greater number of those lazy individuals who totally failed to make use of the opportunity “to steep their minds in the profound wisdom” of *Mein Kampf*, and the army of superficial and part-readers who happily took advantage of the other Nazi axiom—that “it is the right spirit which matters more than theoretical knowledge”—were nevertheless full-blooded Nazis, as is proved by their general conduct and their activities as members of the manifold party organisations.

We are concerned with the content of the Nazi literature only in so far as it may help us to judge the German mentality. Thus we need not bore the reader with a detailed survey. But we must, at least, examine some of the basic dogmas laid down in Hitler’s acknowledged encyclopaedia of Nazism, in order to reveal the essence of the whole matter, and to estimate the import of the Nazi literature as regards developments in Germany and the state of mind of the present German generation.

Let us begin with the theoretical foundations of Nazism. Its basic dogma that the “State” is not an institution created by, or existing for the benefit of, its citizens, but an organism with its own life and ends, independent of, and superior to, the interests of all its inhabitants, who owe it obedience, follows exactly the Fascist doctrine as defined by Alfredo Rocco. “The State is an organism distinct from the citizens . . . and has its own life and its ends, higher than those of individuals, to which those individuals must be subordinated.” This again was by no means a new theory, being merely a revival of the obsolete doctrine of State sovereignty which was enunciated in this country, in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, 250 years ago, and which reappeared later, in a refined form, in the “Austinian

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 102

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System," the bugbear of generations of English law students. Indeed, these older legal theories, which were developed before modern historical and sociological research had thrown fresh light on the genesis of the State and sovereignty, were much more in harmony with the German bias toward mysticism, and the German's inveterate and officially fostered inclination to follow a deified leader who embodies the State itself, than with the less "profound" but cooler and more sober way of thinking characteristic of the democratic peoples of Western Europe. Austin had to give up his London university career, more than a hundred years ago, because the ordinary run of English law students were unwilling to attend his ponderous lectures, which had been influenced by his studies in Germany. But Giercke's lectures, fifty years later, in Berlin, were attended by throngs of young Germans who delighted in his dogmatic speculations as to the "real personality" of the State. However, students of legal philosophy do not represent the political mentality of the average individual, and no one will seriously contend that even in Germany the niceties of some legal theory about the nature of the sovereign State, however mystically embellished, would fascinate the ordinary citizen to such a degree as to provide the "dynamic of a national movement." Nor would anyone believe in earnest that plans for a "modern" class or corporative State, or some mysterious ideas of the Fuhrer as to introducing some sort of Neo-feudalism,<sup>1</sup> could have evoked a paroxysm of enthusiasm among the masses.

The same may be said of the theoretical basis of the "authoritarian government." This again follows the Fascist pattern as defined in the Italian "Labour Charter" "The Government is an organism having ends, life, and means of action superior to those of the separate individuals or groups of individuals which compose it. It is a moral, political, and economic unity which is integrally realised in the Fascist State." This Fascist-Nazi doctrine with all its verbosity shows the same unavoidable obscurities in confounding State and Government, like all the earlier absolutistic theories from which it was derived, while most of the German commentators—and, above all, the German practice—extended the dictatorial powers of the Leader even farther than in Italy. We are not forgetting that Rosenberg, in his *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, subordinated, in theory, the Government to the *interests* of the people as a whole. This lip-service to "interests" which were to be judged alone by the Fuhrer, while the community of citizens had no say in the matter, was of course, quite without consequence. When all the powers of the State, without the smallest reservation, are embraced in the "Leader," it

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 185-186

makes no difference whatever whether you call him the embodiment of the "State," or the sole and absolute representative of the "people"; and you will be merely haggling about words, whether you declare that his arbitrary actions are performed in order to achieve the independent ends of a superior State, or whether you claim that it is their function to realise a so-called supreme value (*Hochstwert*) in the "interest of the people"—as, of course, the ruler always pretends. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a dictator who would admit that any one of his actions was not in the highest interest of the State, and of the people also! But again Even apart from the moral and philosophical inconclusiveness of the authoritarian government of a self-appointed dictator, it seems unimaginable that any theories of absolute government could ever be regarded as the "spiritual basis of a national movement." Dictatorship may be regarded as a useful expedient, in critical times, and the longing for a strong hand has, indeed, often enough become evident in a frustrated people, when it was felt that the concentration of power in the hand of a vigorous, well-known, and trusted personality might save the nation. Then it was the immediate, dire necessity, on the one side, and the man who inspired the masses, on the other, that evoked the demand, but it was not the attraction of the "dictator principle" as such. On the other hand, one has the feeling that it would be an oversimplification to explain the fanatical urge of the German people—completely and once for all (for a "thousand years") to surrender all individual freedom—solely by the fact that a self-appointed Führer and his chieftains succeeded in persuading the masses that this was the price which the ordinary man must pay in order to achieve human and material progress, "because democracy is always inefficient." Millions of human beings of all times have given their lives in struggling *against* tyrants and tyrannies—but have any willingly died for the "ideal" of a dictatorship as such? Even the German herd-instinct and bias towards following the commands of a god-like Kaiser or War Lord always presumed both the influence of a mystic personality, such as Barbarossa, the Great Elector, Frederick the Great, or Bismarck, and an impressive common end—though not of necessity an ideal one — in favour of which the man was able to fanaticize the masses. State absolutism and the Leader-principle may be highly desirable "ends in themselves" for the dictator—but hardly for the people. They may be regarded as some sort of external shell, but they can never form the content of a national movement. They are assuredly nothing to die for. Thus, even if we admit the "magic influence of the Leader's personality," we remain still in ignorance of the spiritual content of Nazism.

## THE "SPIRITUAL" CONTENT OF NAZISM

For a time there were many people, especially abroad,<sup>1</sup> who thought to find this spiritual basis in some much-advertised, high-sounding, ideal aims. The Third Reich, it was announced, would rest on three main pillars: "cultural renaissance"; internal and external "political regeneration," which included "the fight against Bolshevism"; and "restoration of economic and social security."<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that the noisy announcement of these great aims was a powerful means of propaganda, well calculated to allure the German masses, who felt the insufficiency of their changing "democratic" governments. It was, indeed, a simple matter to proclaim a few abstract aims. But the mere enunciation of vague ideals, without a clear explanation of what they really meant, and of the ways and means by which they were to be attained, was nothing more, of course, than empty demagogic verbiage. We shall compare, in the course of this book, one by one, the pretended aims and the achievements of the Nazis in the various spheres of life, and show that no constructive ideas, no practical plans, were forthcoming as earnest of a genuine attempt to achieve these fine generalities. Moreover, when it came to deeds, it was apparent that these were often enough the direct antithesis of whatever the words had indicated. What stood revealed, before long, as the real core of the movement was worse than bluff: it was—to be brief—precisely what the world now calls the "evil of Nazism." A few foreign diplomats, many prominent dupes, and a large number of petty philistines abroad, who had not in time perceived that the Nazi vocabulary involved a total transvaluation of all generally accepted moral definitions,<sup>3</sup> were grievously disillusioned when it appeared that the fine and peaceful phrases of the Nazi philosophers and politicians had been devised only to conceal the ultimate purpose: aggression and world domination.<sup>4</sup> The fact, however, that in Germany the allegiance of the masses to Nazism, and their faith in their Leader, remained unshaken even when the inconsistency of the words and the deeds of the leading men must have dawned upon the most primitive minds, when the real purpose of Nazi politics and the actual meaning of the new "philosophy" had become unmistakably clear, and when the "Hitler Bible" was no longer of value even as a guide to Hitler's own moves<sup>5</sup>—this assures us, beyond a doubt, that the alleged "ideal aims" did not really constitute the powerful agent at the bottom of a popular movement which was still very much alive although the "aims" were obviously as dead as a doornail.

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 105-109

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 36, 37, 42, 174-185

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 56-58, 87, 94, 100, 139, 168, 170, 195

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp. 51-55, 84, 99, 100, 126, 144, 159, 196.

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp. 213, 230-233, 237-238.

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We must therefore revert to what may with greater reason be regarded as the real core of the whole matter Pan-Germanism.

It may be that there was once a certain ideal quality in the "dream" which had inspired Fichte's "Political Speeches" in the beginning of the 19th century, "the dream of accomplishing Barbarossa's work by uniting all Germans in one Reich" Wagner's "New German *Kultur*,"<sup>1</sup> too, and even the somewhat arrogant words of a German poet that "one day, by German nature, shall the world be healed," had certainly an ideal import, although they were afterwards extensively exploited, with very materialistic intentions, by the political Pan-Germanists. In practice, however, the comprehensive Barbarossa ideal had been almost forgotten, and, by the middle of the 18th century, the "German dream" had crystallised in the popular mind into nothing more ambitious than the wish to put an end to the unbearable economic conditions which had developed in the diminutive German States. Twenty years later this desire was fully satisfied, in the opinion of most Germans, by the foundation of the "Reich." Indeed, there had been considerable resistance in many parts of Germany against the virtual incorporation in the Greater Prussia which Bismarck's Reich actually constituted.<sup>2</sup> A mere customs union would have much better answered the wishes not only of the princes, but also of the populations of the smaller German States.<sup>3</sup> At all events, it was apparent how wise had been Bismarck's "prudence" when he withstood the pressure of the hotheads to include in a "Greater Germany" regions still more peripheral, still less homogeneous, and only partly German. The Pan-Germanists in the days of Wilhelm II were less considerate. They insisted on postulating a "Reich" which was to comprise all those districts — whether or not they contained a majority of German origin — which allegedly "belonged economically or strategically to Germany," as, e.g., the Belgian ore districts; and in addition, renewing the old complaint that Britain had occupied the world and left nothing for Germany,<sup>4</sup> they demanded a large colonial empire. Similar theories, often combined with anti-Semitic ideas, underlay the teaching of many popular German historians and philosophers — to name only Treitschke and de Lagarde — and spread rapidly among the students. A new school of Pan-Germanist writers helped to promote these currents of opinion. They began to connect the mystical ideas of a pretended German cultural and political "mission" with the expansionist and bellicose doctrines of one-sided German

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 58, 105-6

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 16-18

<sup>3</sup>Cf p. 288

<sup>4</sup>Cf p 22



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sociologists. Suffice it to mention the much-read work of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Grundlagen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Foundations of the 20th century). The political mentality of the groups and circles to which these writers mainly addressed themselves — Junkers, captains of industry, officers and reserve-officers, nationalist students and professional men—found its expression in the activities of the "Kaiserlicher Flotten- und Kolonialverein" (the Imperial Naval and Colonial Association). They, as already mentioned, were the real culprits of the Great War.<sup>1</sup>

Pan-Germanist agitation began afresh immediately after the Treaty of Versailles, when Germany was said to have been forcibly "dismembered". It increased rapidly in proportion as the weakness of the Weimar Republic revealed itself and after Stresemann came to the helm<sup>2</sup>. The works of Oswald Spengler—"The Decline of the West" and "Prussianism and Socialism"—renewing and extending the doctrine of a specific German *Kultur* and forecasting an inevitable gigantic struggle between the "decadent" powers of the West and a Prussianised Germany, began to exercise an ever-growing influence. The new, far-reaching aspirations themselves were first clearly expressed in the writings of General von Bernhardi, on which Hitler's plans were originally based. The scheme of expansion there outlined was no longer even confined to the recovery of those formerly German districts which, actually or allegedly, wished to "return to the Reich", nor to the restoration of the former German colonies. Bernhardi not only claimed all those adjoining districts which Germany "needed"<sup>3</sup> for military or economic reasons, but he demanded furthermore the recognition of Germany as a "leading power" with prevalent interests in the whole of Eastern Europe ("Drang nach dem Osten"). But already a still more ambitious plan was outlined by Hitler's new chief adviser in the sphere of Pan-Germanism, General von Haushofer—a great German Reich stretching from Flushing to Vladivostok, with Africa as an annex, to be exploited through its "racially inferior" coloured population, which was to be held in actual slavery<sup>4</sup>. Even this, so to speak, half-official plan—expounded in Haushofer's periodical after the onslaught on Russia—was temporarily surpassed, by fantastic "intuitions" of the leader himself.

Haushofer had developed a complete "Science of Pan-Germanism"—he called it "Geo-Politics"<sup>5</sup>—and at enormous cost an institute with

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 20-21

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 32-33, 39-40

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 159 (note 1), 186-187

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp. 94, 193-195

<sup>5</sup>Cf Sir Halford Mackinder's book, "Democratic Ideals and Reality" (1919)

world-wide connections was erected, before the new war, in Munich, for the development and propagation of this "science"—a mélange of strategy, geography, politics, economics, and history. It included in its activities all and everything which seemed to promote its thinly veiled purpose of preparing for German world domination. The foreign statesmen and diplomatists who were not awake, before this war, to the dangerous nature of the German aspirations, could easily have learned what was brewing if, instead of relying on Hitler's lame assertions that "Germany had no further territorial claims," they had paid, in time, a little attention to the publications of the Haushofer institute, and also to the rapid sales of nationalistic literature, of which Schemann's *Von Deutscher Zukunft*, with its ardent hatred of the whole non-German world, still deserves special mention. How many "last claims" were necessary before the appeasers understood what every trained Hitler Youth knew perfectly well?<sup>1</sup>

Such was the neo-Pan-Germanism of our time, and it is abundantly clear that it had even less in common with any idealistic "dream of German unity" than had the Pan-German movement of the Wilhelmian epoch. "Living Space" and the "New Order" were euphemistic phrases to conceal the worst kind of chauvinistic imperialism,<sup>2</sup> and it must still be added that the Führer's Pan-German appeal to the national greed was directly attuned to the personal acquisitiveness of every single member of the master-people—much more than, a generation earlier, Wilhelm II's promises of "splendid times" and "a place in the sun" had ever been.<sup>3</sup> One hesitates to write down the conclusion that this kind of Pan-Germanism constituted in fact the sole foundation of Nazism. But it must be repeated that the most careful investigations did not reveal anything

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 152-155, 193-195, 204

<sup>2</sup>Was it really possible, even after the beginning of the World War, honestly to misunderstand the meaning of this insatiable German expansionism? It was. There were still people ready to fall into Hitler's trap, as did one of the critics of the earlier version of this book, a reputable Irish journalist, the only one of all the reviewers who considered the opinions of Hitlerism expressed in this book to be "misleading." He credited Hitler with aspiring to the "ideal" of the Reich of Barbarossa, and put the following question "How far is the memory of the mediaeval Empire a force likely to modify or to divert the course set by racialism?" If by this mystical question the inquirer meant to indicate the expectation that the incorporation of peoples of different races in a Greater Germany must lead to a mitigation of the arrogant German racialism, past experiences in the enslaved countries had already provided a pretty clear answer. To this we shall return in another context (cf pp 137-138, 272). But it seemed worth while, at this juncture, to nail to the wall the practice of asking enigmatical questions in the public press, or in debate, and indulging in high-sounding and often metaphysical phrases about the German "ideology", because this is precisely the same method—the drawing of a red herring across the track—which again and again was employed to conceal the emptiness of the Nazi "philosophy."

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 60, 153-155, 186-189, 201-202, 230

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else which could justly claim to be regarded as the core of the movement. Of course, its crass materialism had to be decently veiled, and for this purpose nothing less than a new "world philosophy" had to be proclaimed. We shall devote another chapter to its analysis, and to the contemplation of its auxiliary doctrines and practical achievements. But we must here anticipate by insisting that the whole philosophical system was never an end in itself, but merely a means to serve the one, all-important purpose: Pan-Germanism—or, rather, world-domination.<sup>1</sup>

The "world-philosophy," with all its ancillary sciences and theories—racial, legal, historical, social, economic, etc., and all the other novel doctrines of the Nazis—was expressly invented for the purpose of concentrating and mobilising all the material, spiritual, and emotional resources of the nation under the control of the leader, and of preparing the mood of the people for the projected conquest of the world. Consequently both these curious hypotheses—that of the racial superiority of the Germans, and that of the predestinate German mission to proceed to world-domination—which together, as we shall see,<sup>2</sup> constituted the core of the "world-philosophy"—had to be impressed on every single German. Therefore, Christianity had to be destroyed and replaced by the axiom that "by the law of nature" the stronger had to destroy the weaker,<sup>3</sup> while it was taken for granted that the Germans were always the stronger. Therefore, the German leader had to be deified as the embodiment of supreme strength and power.<sup>4</sup>

It is not easily understood how the majority of Germans should have failed to perceive the absurdity, when they were told they were entitled to conquer the world because that was their destiny; that it was their destiny because they were racially superior; that they were racially superior because they were the strongest people in the world, and that they were the strongest people because they were racially superior. Moreover, nobody in Germany seems to have asked himself, at that time, what would be the consequence of this sort of argumentation if it should turn out, after all, that the Germans were not superior to all the other peoples in the world? Again, it needed "a genuine German mind" to make a man believe that, "because" it was a "law of nature" that the stronger must destroy the weaker, he was morally entitled to rob the individual members of an "inferior" race or people of their private property or liberty,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 84, 94, 100, 106, 159

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 83-4, 94, 100, 106, 144, 159, 196

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 85-86

<sup>4</sup>Cf. pp. 66-68

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while Fritz must be hanged if he applied the same law of nature inside Germany to his weaker neighbour Hans

No doubt many people must have seen through the game, and others have felt, at least instinctively, its immorality. But they succumbed to their passions and to the herd-instinct. Hitler's three-fold appeal — to national and individual greed (by means of wild promises), to the German mysticism (by the revival of the Barbarossa myth of the "master people's" vocation to rule the world under the command of a deified leader), and to vanity (by proclaiming the racial superiority of the Germans)—had the desired effect. We have to accept the evidence that millions of Germans really were induced to act in accordance with the Nazi theories, but we cannot admit that either the Pan-Germanist craze itself, or the "philosophy" enunciated in its support, can rightly be called a "spiritual" basis of the Nazi movement. One may argue that this is merely a dispute about words, as Pan-Germanism, however morbid and artificially bred, admittedly constituted the principal motive power of Nazism. The distinction is nevertheless essential. Or would you describe the insane urges of maniacs as "spiritual" motives? True, it could be said of Nazism if of anything: "there is method in this madness." But madness it remained—explicit in the "world-philosophy," and embodied in the leader,<sup>1</sup> and, to a lesser degree, also in the led, in whom a real mass-psychosis was induced.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we have to abandon, in the German case, the orthodox opinion that a popular movement could not subsist without a genuine "spiritual basis." What brought the angry German masses together under the "Leader Principle" was the influence of naked materialism and chauvinism. It will be the task of the following two chapters to show the purposeful virtuosity with which the explosive mental mixture which had developed in Germany—that peculiar mood which might be called "The German Brand of 1932"—was skilfully brought to the point of detonation by means of a wild, incessant, and refined agitation.

## II

A few general remarks must be added as regards the "spirituality" of Hitler's book and the intellectual and moral level which its author obviously, and justly, attributed to the public which he was addressing. One day, perhaps, a learned "Anti-Kampf" will be written,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 208-211.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 227-231

<sup>3</sup>Cf p 68

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exposing with German thoroughness all the inconsistencies, the intentional and involuntary misrepresentations, and the arrogant, provocative platitudes of the Hitler Bible — though the effort would hardly be worth while. For in the course of our enquiry it will become increasingly apparent that it would be a mistake to take the "spiritual" fabric of the Nazi gospel as such too seriously. Really thoughtful Germans cannot have deceived themselves as to its logical untenableness and moral wickedness—while most of the fanatics who indulged in its empty phrases will not listen to reason. It sometimes seems, indeed, as though Hitler, artful dodger that he was, has resorted — in tragi-comic imitation of his favourite Nietzsche — to the familiar, childish trick of stating the antithesis of almost every ethical axiom, in order to "transvaluate moral values."<sup>1</sup> This would apply not merely to his book, but to all his speeches and, indeed, to the whole body of Nazi literature, and even the mode of Nazi thought. Thus, all that would be necessary, in order to revise the text, would be, so to speak, to exchange all the plus and minus signs. For example, wherever the word "right" appeared in one of Hitler's manifestos, you had only to replace it by "might," to get the real meaning of the passage. If "liberties" were mentioned—whether the reference was to conduct, the expression of opinions, or to a man's secret thoughts—you only had to replace the word by "oppression." Invert the Party slogan "Common Interest goes before Private Profit," and you have to admit that gangster chiefs enriching themselves at the cost of the community were acting in complete accordance with what the initiate perceived to be the secret sense of the dogma. Whenever Hitler has cited his "contributions to peace" — namely, re-armament, re-militarisation of the Rhineland, sabotage of the League of Nations, and the German acts of aggression—you had only to replace the word "peace" by "war," and the complete honesty of his assertions became evident. When the Fuhrer spoke of "the protection of neutrals against the Allies, and the respect of the Axis for the property of others," you had merely to exchange the words "allies" and "axis," and there you had the real meaning of the passage.

It would be wrong to regard this suggestion as cheap sarcasm. Those familiar with the perverted ethic which, since the very beginning of the Hitler movement, has been inculcated upon those attending the "Courses of Instruction" for members of the party and the affiliated organisations, will hardly deny that we have given a fair description of the phraseology which has become significant of the German way of thinking. The Germans understood

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 51, 87, 94, 101, 139, 170, 195.

the secret language,<sup>1</sup> and here you may find the solution of the puzzle, why no one ever seemed to boggle at all the lies and contradictions in Hitler's book—including the various alterations in the foreign editions—and in the manifestations and actions of the leader and the other Nazi chiefs. In this respect one notorious example is pre-eminently illustrative of the "genuine German mind". It will perhaps be remembered that immediately after the seizure of power the promise was given over the wireless, as the first article of the new Nazi policy. "We shall never tell a lie." In confirmation of this promise, the German *Rundfunk* adopted the hymn, "Act faithfully and honestly" as the new interval signal of the wireless station from which Goebbels immediately began to announce his "truths" to the world.

Hitler himself, relying on the ignorance of his followers, said very little about the origin of his doctrines. This reticence had the intended effect. For his dupes, most of whom had never before opened a historical or philosophical work, took his dogmatic assertions to be the mystical inspirations of one specially favoured by God. Actually, not one of the ideas in *Mein Kampf* was new or creative. We have shown that the basic political doctrines of Nazism were anything but original, that the expansionist Pan-Germanism of the Wilhelminian period had only to be revived, that Hitler's military and "geo-political" plans were inspired by the publications of Bernhardi. But the same thing is true of all the other "discoveries" and theories. Just as Hitler's mysterious historical novelties are copied from de Lagarde and Treitschke, so his artistic revelations<sup>2</sup> can be traced in the writings of an extremely prejudiced historian of art, one Frantz, who in the middle of the 19th century first conceived the idea of a specific German *Kultur*, which was then adopted by Wagner, revived at the close of the century, and proclaimed anew, in a completely distorted and exaggerated form, by the anti-Semitic and Pan-Germanist literary historian Adolf Bartels, from whom Hitler has borrowed it. But many less obvious sources might be found on which Hitler has drawn—down to those deplorable and ignorant perverters of history and biology on whose authority the "racial theory" was constructed and the sport of Jew-baiting "scientifically" justified.<sup>3</sup> Hitler himself admitted, a little incautiously, that he appropriated from the works which he studied only what suited his own purpose; and his method of reproducing the thoughts of others, torn from their context, and often turned inside out, without giving chapter and verse, is something worse than plagiarism. A meticu-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 231-233.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 105, 108, 109.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 98-100.

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lous inquiry, tracing the ideas in *Mein Kampf* to their various sources, would probably throw a still more sinister light, not only on the book, but also on the character of its author. It would reveal, for instance, the bashfully concealed fact that the idea of a social fellowship of the German nation (*Volksgemeinschaft*), on which the Nazis prided themselves so greatly — and which constituted in its original form, i.e., without the "racial" limitations, a noble manifestation of a profound and democratic love of humanity — was first promoted, about the middle of the 19th century, by the Jewish author Berthold Auerbach, in his popular prose romances (*Volksbücher*). On the other hand, Hitler—wishing to borrow the lustre of a famous name—had no hesitation in claiming that the Nazi "world-philosophy" was based upon Nietzsche. This claim, however, cannot be accepted without comment. Opinions on Nietzsche are divided. When he developed his philosophy of might he was, probably, already affected by a progressive hyper-irritability, a symptom of that mental disease which led, eventually, to insanity. However that may be, what Hitler, and the other Nazi "philosophers," with their exaggerations and distortions, have made of the fantasies of a great mind cannot really be called Nietzschean at all.<sup>1</sup>

The longer the author pondered on the problem of the import of Hitler's "Kampf" on the German craze, the more definitely did he realise that the "spiritual" influence of this clumsy mixture of obsolete and incongruous political theories, mystical fantasies, perversions of history, and what not, was not of a kind substantially different from the influence of any other massive and refined propaganda. The more he seized every opportunity of discussion with adherents of the "movement" in all classes of society, the more clearly it became evident that the most remarkable effect of the Hitler Bible was to provide the possessors of the book—including non-readers, readers without understanding, and even many of those who were capable of perceiving that the contents were neither new nor true—with a convenient pretext for assuring inconvenient inquirers and, perhaps, themselves that all human problems had been settled in advance, once and for all, by the omniscient German leader.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 99-100. As to further falsifications of the views of well-known German writers, see also p. 108.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE GERMAN BRAND OF 1932

##### *The renaissance of the uniform—The herd-instinct.*

UZARSKI, probably the best of the, significantly enough, very few German grotesque humorists of modern times, has pictured in his ironical novels the specific mentality of the pre-Nazi period — the peculiar German mixture of sentimentality, cunning, vulgarity, touchiness, rudeness, servility towards superiors, and boastful arrogance towards inferiors in place and power — all this displayed against the background of advancing Nazism. If you compare these significant caricatures with their counterpart from a neighbouring nation, Hasek's infinitely more good-natured "Schweik," a sharp contrast is perceptible between the mentality of the average German and that of the Czech philistine. What strikes you most is the difference between Schweik's sober patriotism and the excited chauvinism of the German; between the profound aversion from war felt by the Czech dog-dealer and the popular German feeling that war is something natural, a mere change in the normal way of living, necessary and even welcome from time to time, if people are to avoid growing rusty, a thing not to be regarded with horror, but as a means of salvation from unvarying monotony, as the great opportunity in the life of a German for once in a way to "live out his nature" without restraint, by participating in the feat of conquest — to the greater glory of the Fatherland, and not without profit to the individual conqueror. Uzarski's well-meant attempt to impress his compatriots by confronting them with a ruthlessly witty portrait, in the nature of Peter Watt's "John Bullock," appealed very little indeed to the German taste, and was in any case no more effective than the efforts of Heinrich Mann in his serious political novels.<sup>1</sup> Uzarski's humorous sketches and cartoons, feared and hated by the Nazis, were too pungent for the German intellectuals, with their lack of self-criticism and humour, and too intellectual for the man in the street.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 20, 311.

<sup>2</sup>Early Nazi propaganda had explained that self-mockery was a product of a "decomposing mind," strange to, and unworthy of, the master-people. In 1943, obviously in connection with the worsening war situation, Goebbels made the sudden discovery that it would be all to the good if the Germans would show more "natural humour," and he made, at once, his own involuntary contribution by ordering a "campaign for the development of the national sense of humour!"



Mental strain and general discontent with the political, social, and economic conditions after the Great War had gradually reached such a pitch that the unsettled state of mind of the "German Brand of 1932" formed an ideal soil in which the poisonous weed of Nazism was able to grow unchecked and suffocate the last vestiges of reason and decency. In this milieu Hitler's propaganda scored two bull's-eyes, one by the introduction of wholesale Jew-baiting, to which we shall devote a special chapter, the other by restoring to the Germans their temporarily lost idol—the uniform.

It is almost impossible to overestimate how important a factor was the revival of the uniform in the propaganda of Nazism. There was no prouder pleasure in Prussia and Imperial Germany than to flaunt a uniform as stiff and colourful as possible, and no German could ever understand that British sailors and soldiers, in peace-time, preferred to wear civilian clothes when on leave. For the worship of the uniform was a real adoration. You must keep this fact in mind if you wish to realise the boldness of Hitler's exploitation of this Prussian ideal in order to win the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. The best places in which to obtain an apt idea of the German veneration of the uniform were the small university towns. Nowhere else were the ideas and reactions of almost every class so plainly manifested—except, perhaps, those of the captains of industry and the industrial workers, unless there were large factories in the neighbourhood. Here was a microcosm of the leading spirits of the university, the students, the military, the landed proprietors of country and town, the business men and tradesmen, in which the general thoughts and feelings of the nation were revealed. This was so in Imperial Germany, so it remained during and after the Great War, and it was not otherwise in Hitler's Germany.

Before the Great War, during the regulation "evening stroll" along the main street, if a student in the colours of his "corps," his face bearing the scars of the *Mensur*, a son, perhaps, of one of the most aristocratic or wealthiest families in Germany, well known to the whole community, and regarded by the citizens—and their daughters—as the embodiment of all social ideals and of the highest earthly happiness, were to walk up and down for a few minutes with a lieutenant of the local garrison—the officer's uniform, in spite of all the student's social advantages, claimed the right of the "side of honour." When a professor—a man, perhaps, of international reputation, of whom the whole town was proud—strolled through the streets with a lieutenant, the young officer again marched on the "side of honour." Even if the professor was his father, or was deaf in his right ear, there could be no disregard of this sacred custom.

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The Kaiser's birthday and "Sedan Day" were the two great opportunities for the members of the better classes to make a parade of their reserve-officer's uniform. The dignitaries of town and university who attended the official banquet did not wear their robes of office or evening dress, but presented themselves in their uniforms as "officers in the reserve." A Prussian Minister of State, a man of more than sixty years, who, for some reason or other, had not been so fortunate as to obtain a commission in the reserve when he served his time with the colours, was one day "distinguished" by his promotion to the rank of lieutenant in the reserve<sup>1</sup>. No one was conscious of the absurdity of this "promotion." The uniform, indeed, stood above everything. We all remember the story of the cobbler Vogt, who made the world laugh as "The Captain of Koepenick," when, donning an officer's uniform, which he had bought in an old-clothes store, he stopped a patrol in the middle of Berlin, marched it off to the town hall of the suburb of Koepenick, and there arrested the mayor and the town clerk. No one had the courage to question the orders of the imperfectly-shaved gentleman, because he was dressed in a captain's worn-out uniform.

The irresistible attraction of the uniform<sup>2</sup>—even the uniform of a postman—was to be explained, of course, by something more than a primitive delight in colours. It was the result of the German education in militarism, and the willing subordination to those who in their coloured tunics and frock-coats and breeches symbolised the power of the State. Here something of the true roots of Prussianism was revealed. Everybody who represented, in however small a degree, its Omnipotence the State, was in a position of personal superiority to the ordinary civilian. A German would have looked upon the signing of an official letter by "your obedient servant" as an act of lunacy. An official did not serve the public; he "despatched" its affairs. And here we see the contrast between the democratic view, that the State is an organisation created in the interests of its citizens, and the German conviction — in Nazi Germany officially proclaimed in law<sup>3</sup> — that the individual is in the first place a "subject," whose function it is to serve the State, that higher type of organism, with its own mystical life and ends, represented in its totality once by the King of Prussia, and then by the Führer. In the average German the sentiment was deeply rooted that he was nothing of himself; that he must first of all prove, so to speak, his right to exist, by legitimising himself somehow as a servant of the State—if possible by wearing a uniform. Thus far,

<sup>1</sup>It was the Prussian Minister of Commerce, Moller Cf p 164.

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 16

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 48-49, 118.

indeed, the "totalitarian" conception of the State was in perfect harmony with the inveterate sentiments of the average German long before the advent of Hitler.

The inevitable shock to the uniform-loving German mind which ensued on the dissolution of the great army was intensified when the Weimar Republic, at the same time, did away with uniforms in many branches of Government service, while a simultaneous but feeble attempt to abolish also the beloved high-sounding "titles" of state officials of all kinds had soon to be abandoned. The attack on the "titles" was, indeed, merely an ill-considered act of iconoclasm, which could avail nothing in the way of reducing the reactionary influence of the old bureaucracy<sup>1</sup> until the mentality of the German people should become really democratic. It would have been much better to apply the British method of preserving traditional forms and names, even though their content has undergone a revolutionary change. In any case, the intended purpose, which was to give the man in the street a sense of pride in his new, democratic liberty, could not be achieved by a measure which the German mind simply failed to understand. Not only all the titled officials, who, like the former wearers of uniforms, felt themselves robbed of the insignia of their dignity—the people, too, mourned for the old symbols of the drill-sergeant's spirit, and often even for the drill-sergeant's manner. In any case, to say it again: It was a master-stroke of Hitler's, indeed an act of the most cunning "intuition," to exploit a deeply-rooted popular instinct by making his followers "political soldiers," giving them distinguishing titles and ranks within the wide party organisation, and putting them into the uniform of the S.A. For many Germans the attraction of the S.A. uniform was certainly greater, and probably easier to comprehend, than the mysterious political aims of the Nazis which it was to symbolise. By parading the Hitler uniform one aired, at the same time, one's contempt for the Republic of Weimar and, in receiving orders and passing them on to inferiors, or even by simply carrying out the commands of one's superiors, one felt happy that one was delivered from the unaccustomed task of political thinking for oneself.

In the remotest villages there suddenly appeared the new, attractive uniforms of the Hitler Guards. I shall never forget that Sunday morning when I first discovered one of my farm-hands in the new S.A. uniform. The villagers did not regard the gaily-coloured warrior with amusement, but with the most earnest admiration. The new uniform exercised at once the old familiar fascination upon both sexes alike. When a few days later the new "Storm-Leader,"

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 27-28

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the cowman on a neighbouring estate, turned up, in a kind of army captain's uniform, and it became known that in the new Hitler Guards there was to be real military drill, followed by hard drinking of immense quantities of beer, which the publicans, and some intimidated landowners, willy-nilly had to stand, there was no end to the enthusiasm aroused. Everywhere in the towns and villages the S.A. men assembled several times a week for their new kind of playing at soldiers. "At your command, troop-leader!" How soldierly that sounded! Or, still more delightfully: "Your health, storm-leader!" Just as in an officers' mess! And how all the girls' hearts warmed towards the new Hitler warriors!

The most splendid feature of all, however, was that in the new Hitler Guards the insurmountable barriers were removed which had formerly separated the N.C.O.s and privates from the Olympian heights of the commissioned officers. The admission of former N.C.O.s to officers' rank—which, in the earlier stages of the "movement," may have been dictated by necessity, since there were not enough former army officers ready to enter the Hitler Guards—proved so successful that Hitler did not fail to introduce, in due course, a similar system in the new army.<sup>1</sup> Now, how could anyone resist this man, who, at the very outset of his career, had so facilitated the highest ambition of every German to wear an officer's uniform? Weighed against this consideration, what were all those so-called democratic achievements and civilian liberties? "To hell with liberty! Out with the uniform!"

At the mass meetings, to the jerky melodies of an S.A. band, "personally conducted by the famous Storm-Leader Fusel,"<sup>2</sup> the Hitler Guards, in their new uniforms, marched into the hall with equal step, and there, at the head of his troop, was one's own brother or fiancé! Here were explosive words of command and Prussian discipline! The tedious, never-ending speeches at the democratic meetings, the dissertations on the Constitution of Weimar, the League of Nations, or the economic difficulties of Germany, were all forgotten. How different everything sounded when Hitler spoke! Now you could hear the truth! It was a damned lie that the army had lost the war! It had been stabbed in the back by the Jews and the tools of the Jews, the Liberals, the Freemasons, the Marxists and Communists! Now everything would be changed! How? The Leader would decide that, and he alone! All these matters had been

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 148, 242.

<sup>2</sup>Fusel—meaning bad brandy—was, in fact, the name of the best-known S.A. band leader.

dealt with in his famous book.<sup>1</sup> There would be no more long debates. One had simply to obey, as in the good old Prussian days. "Very good, Storm-Leader!"

How simple, how magnificently simple! To command and to obey — the old times were revived indeed! All this is neither a jest nor an exaggeration. The Germans believed in all this agreeable nonsense, which was impressed upon them with such immense and flatulent emphasis. To them it was like a revelation. They had not been defeated at all—they had been assassinated. Hitler, like the former Kaiser, knew very well, when he arranged for his bombastic manifestations and parades, that no words of wisdom, no verbal propaganda, could so deeply impress the German mind as his military displays.<sup>2</sup> If the horrors of the Great War had been felt deep in their own country, especially by the women, perhaps the memory would not have been shaken off so easily. But as things were, they felt themselves outwitted, but not conquered, and therefore under no obligation to keep to the "treacherous peace conditions, surreptitiously obtained by the betrayal of the Fourteen Points." By whom were the conditions signed? Not by the old traditional leaders!<sup>3</sup> No, by the Marxists, Freemasons and Jews, the same gentry who had stabbed the nation in the back! Even more significant than the manner in which the Nazis developed the legend of the "stab in the back" which the generals had invented—in order to safeguard the prestige of the army—was the readiness with which the German masses swallowed the bait.

In the German parliament matters had followed much the same pattern. Already before Hitler took over, the Reichstag had been "purged" of all adversaries of the Nazis, with the exception of a few insignificant opposition deputies who had been cunningly spared, in order to have somebody to snub. S. A. men with pistols in their belts were placed between the deputies' benches at the decisive sitting, during which the motion granting dictatorial powers to Hitler was carried. But although the procedure was obviously illegal—just as the act itself constituted a clear violation of the constitution—there can be no doubt that the great majority of the representatives of the nation agreed to it. There had been a scene of frantic enthusiasm when Hitler, in the preceding "debate," had roughly replied, in response to a modest question as to the new government's future politics, that there was no need of a programme beside the "Kampf," and "all would be seen as soon as he began to rule." That was the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 30, 42, 59.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 200-203

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 25, 26, 32, 203, 283

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crucial point, both for Hitler and for the German masses! For him, because he was greedy to seize and exercise power; for the masses, because they were no less eager to place themselves under his command, who was so completely a man after their own hearts<sup>1</sup>. He promised everybody just exactly what he wanted. The officers were promised a new army, the workless employment, better wages and sound dwellings, the farmers high and stable prices for their products: the industrialists and big business men prosperity, expansion, and the abolition of strikes; the small traders and handicraftsmen profitable trade and industry. How all these expectations were to be realised was Hitler's secret, he did not explain how he would fulfil them, and nobody dared to press this question. People may well have felt in their inmost hearts that there were no practical recipes for such a state of general bliss. Previous governments had always been ready enough to explain why all their efforts had failed. The glorious thing about Hitler's promised paradise was that there was no need to rack one's own brains as to the methods of achieving that wonderland, in fact, one definitely ought not to do so. It was one of the magnificent simplicities of Nazism that one could simply tell inconveniently inquisitive people to mind their own business, and not to bother about things which the Leader alone would "command" to happen in his own good time. While any democratic people would have revolted against such nonsense, the Germans preferred to see the "busybodies snubbed who asked foolish questions"

What seemed at first to us to be the weakest point of the Nazi movement—its lack of all spiritual values, and of logical principle—proved to be its real strength. For the politically immature and labile German people has always preferred to follow its passions rather than use its brains. The Germans, as we have seen, did not feel the need of a lucid explanation of the spiritual content, and the political aims of their "movement," or of the ways and means by which its objects were to be achieved. They simply succumbed to the irrational but sentimentally impressive propaganda of their queer Messiah. In one of the first American films to make Nazism its subject, a mass meeting was pictured with great attention to detail and admirable truth to life. We may draw our own conclusions as to what, in the opinion of the author of that film, would strike the American public most forcibly, from the fact that the immediate reaction of the American visitor who attended the meeting, with all its ostentatious display of music, flags, enthusiasm, and boastful speeches, was to exclaim: "How fantastic and empty all this is!" In this film a "Hitler youth," when asked to define the essence

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 229-230

of Nazism, replied: "Heil Hitler!" — and "Very good!" was the solemn comment of the inspecting party official

The German people's regulation reply to the question as to what National Socialism meant was, indeed, as in the film: "Heil Hitler!"<sup>1</sup> It seems there was none more to the point. This answer marked the perfectly uncritical, absolute devotion of the people to the man by whom they felt themselves to be transported and whom they deified. This applies to both sexes and all classes. The writer was struck when one Sunday morning a countrywoman, who had just attended divine service, said to him: "Isn't it wonderful that God has sent this Saviour to the Germans, just as Christ was sent nineteen hundred years ago?" The remark not only illustrated the state of mind of an elderly woman whom I had always believed to be a mature and reasonable person, but also the attitude of an average village parson. In town and country alike there were many clergymen who so completely forgot their gospel and their duties that in their sermons they actually compared Hitler with Christ.<sup>2</sup> Another example tends to show how small were the demands of the "best" people in respect of any spiritual content of the movement. I remember vividly a talk with one of the biggest German industrialists, whom I had known for many years as a level-headed and clever business man. When the conversation turned on general matters the magnate suddenly took from a secret drawer a sketch of a fist in which many strings came together. In his enthusiasm for Hitler he had drawn this symbol with his own illustrious hand. However, he admitted freely that apart from the "Leader-Principle and the Fight against Communism" he knew practically nothing of the Nazi doctrines. If we compare the rather different pictures which the bigoted old woman, and the industrialist admirer of a strong hand, which should allow him to restore his own dictatorship in his factories, had made for themselves of their Fuhrer, we perceive how perfectly the Nazi propaganda succeeded in confusing people's minds, until everyone saw in Hitler an idol precisely in conformity with his own wishful thinking.

The grotesque fact that a national movement in which many millions of human beings were caught could be kindled by such means, can be ultimately explained only by the persisting herd-instinct of a politically primitive, submissive people which, owing to the Great War and the troubles of the post-war period, had completely lost its bearings. True, the worst offenders were Hitler's powerful backers, members of the former ruling classes, who, blinded by their egoism, had allowed themselves to be made the tools of a national

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 59, 229, 230.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 87-88

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impostor, under the delusion that they would be able to lead him by the nose.<sup>1</sup> The democratic governments had been criminally weak, they, too, must bear their share of guilt. But the real cause of the disaster remains the skilful exploitation of the political herd-instinct of the German masses. They were fascinated by Hitler's personality. In his brutal will to power, his violent suppression of all individualism, his intolerance and fury, they saw the embodiment of their own instinctive feelings. This was the "Leader" under whose command they would fulfil the mystical German mission. "The world shall be ours to-morrow, as Germany is to-day." We shall examine later, in more detail, the characteristics of this "magical personality," and trace the ulterior reasons why the Germans confided so utterly in this man, and why they stuck to him for more than twelve years, in peace and war, in spite of all their disappointments.<sup>4</sup> The reader will find it easier to apprehend this when he has obtained a more comprehensive notion of the German mind. But first of all we shall turn to the second bull's-eye which was scored by the Fuhrer in his provocation of the great Jew-baiting

## CHAPTER IV

### JEW-BAITING

*Summary of the position of the German Jews since their emancipation—The anti-Semitic movement at the end of the 19th century—The "racial" anti-Semitism of the Nazis and its political and commercial exploitation.*

HITLER's appeal to the instincts of intolerance and covetousness could hardly have assumed a more alluring form than the incitement to proceed to the great Jew-baiting. The "System-Government" alone was too abstract a thing to hate with unreflecting passion. Something more concrete had to be found against which the fury of the masses could be directed. For "one of the most effective means to be used by an agitator, in order to compel the masses to his will, and make them his bondsmen, is to rouse their common hatred, and to direct it against a common object under his own guidance." So wrote

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 39-40, 42-43, 139, 166, 173-175, 235-236.

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 200-210.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. pp. 237-241.



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Freud, and the Nazis had good cause to burn the works of this penetrating searcher of the soul, who had revealed some of the unadmitted, and probably to a certain degree subconscious, motives of their outrages.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand the more underlying and esoteric causes of the great success of Hitler's Jew-baiting—a success which appears rather significant when we endeavour to analyse the German mentality — the historic development of modern anti-Semitism in Germany must be considered in some detail. The emancipation of the German Jews ensued in connection with the general abolition of *Leibeigenschaft* (bondage) at the time of the Napoleonic occupation, though some of the German Jews had already enjoyed a certain liberty. Immediately after their emancipation they had an opportunity of serving in the German Wars of Liberation, and their conduct in these wars facilitated their entry into the civil life of the community. During the centuries of their seclusion in the ghettos they had little opportunity of pursuing occupations which demanded physical strength and bodily ability, though in the course of time the strictness of their confinement had been relaxed. Farming had been impossible, and opportunities for practising the handicrafts had been very limited. But even in the appalling conditions of the ghettos they had managed to maintain a spiritual life of their own. Apart from the study of Jewish theology and medicine, they had produced some well-known philosophers, among whom was Moses Mendelssohn, the model of Lessing's "Nathan the Sage." For the majority of the Jews, however, there had been no openings except in trade, and their commercial ability had thus been intensively developed. The poorer Jews had wandered about the country with their pedlars' packs, the rich dealt in money.

As a matter of course it was mainly these customary occupations which underwent further development when the barriers were opened. The intellectually active sons of the ghetto scholars flocked to the universities and into the learned professions, although, for all the then prevailing scientific liberalism, it was not made very easy for them to succeed. But external obstacles have always proved an incentive to the efficient. It is astonishing, with respect to the conditions in which many of these people had lived before, to note how quickly they worked their way to spiritual liberty, and how many prominent men in every sphere of intellectual and artistic life came from Jewry during the years following the emancipation. One could fill pages with the names of prominent German-Jewish authors, artists, doctors, philosophers, lawyers, sociologists, scientific chemists,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 100, 211

#### THE GERMAN MENTALITY

and technologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those circles in which spiritual affinity meant more than physical similarity became more and more accessible to the Jews; family connections were formed, and a gradual amalgamation took place which was by no means to the disadvantage of the German people.

Most of the Jews, however, continued to seek a livelihood in trade and commerce, and it will be readily understood that the energy of these people, to whom their freshly gained liberty of movement was something new and delightful, resulted in a good deal of inconvenient competition. While many Jews succeeded in developing private banks, warehouses, and factories, the more progressive Gentile business men benefited by a healthy rivalry, which was all the more tolerable, inasmuch as the majority of customers and clients, in town and country, naturally preferred to do business with the old familiar firms. Those who were continuing to make their way did not become anti-Semites. Occasionally they associated themselves with their new competitors, and, in the course of a century, many links of friendship and closer relationship with the Jews were also formed in commercial circles.

But there were many people who could not bring themselves to put off the old jack-boots; and they, instead of blaming themselves, began to feel angry when they saw that their affairs were deteriorating, while the indefatigable Jews were making headway. The solicitor who saw more than one of his clients deserting him for a Jewish colleague scowled at the industrious upstart. The doctor who was accustomed to going the round of his patients in his carriage had no friendly feelings for the Jewish newcomer who humbly went afoot, slowly building up a practice. At the universities, too, there were presently anti-Semitic cliques of disappointed competitors, who took secret counsel together when they saw a professorial chair which they had regarded as their own preserve occupied by a Jewish outsider. If such a man was conspicuous by reason of his Jewish complexion or name, and if, perhaps with ruthless irony or tactless over-eagerness, he had opposed a Gentile colleague in a conflict of opinion, it was only too easy to complain of the "Jewish impudence" of the intruder and, by seemingly casual comments, to instil the poison of anti-Semitism into the sensitive minds of adolescent students. One example, though of a later period, may serve to illustrate the process. A friend of mine, a well-known composer and a man of fashion, had the unfortunate ambition to win distinction in a field for which his talents did not qualify him. While his delightful songs had touched the hearts of the public, he aspired to win fame as a composer of grand opera. He succeeded at last in getting one of his

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operas performed at a provincial theatre. The critics treated the work with the politeness due to such a famous name, but refused to take it seriously, and, as many of the most influential musical critics in Germany were Jews, this highly-gifted artist conceived a confused notion that "the Jews," in order to give their own people prominence, were resolved to decry him as a composer of operas. It was impossible to talk him out of the belief that the Jewish musical critics, theatre directors, artists, and financiers, had all united in a secret alliance against him. To the day of his death he was obsessed by this insane idea, and he contributed not a little to the propagation of anti-Semitism in musical circles in Germany during the opening decades of this century. On the other hand, tactful moderation is a difficult thing for a newcomer. Some of the *arrivés* of Jewish extraction could not refrain from thrusting themselves forward in politics and social life, while others too eagerly adopted the Prussian tone. Certain authors and scholars of Jewish descent were also too receptive of the "vigorous" ideas of Nietzscheism, which were becoming fashionable in Germany since the close of the nineteenth century. Incidentally, this again shows how little mentality and "race" are connected, and that historical and social development and education alone are the decisive factors which mould the thoughts of individuals, groups, and peoples.

Some readers may still remember the earlier anti-Semitic movement in Germany during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and in the beginning of the twentieth, promoted by the "famous" agitators Liebermann von Sonnenberg, Ahlwardt, and Count Reventlow. It was a time when, despite the boom in the heavy industries, the farmers and the smaller business men were not prospering. The scandalous Prussian system of taxation left the owners of the big estates almost free of tax, while the small peasant owner groaned under the heavy burden he had to bear. In the country towns — especially of some middle German districts which had been annexed in 1866, and where many Jews were living — the handicraftsmen and traders, too, were hard hit by the reduction in the purchasing power of the peasants. Auctions and forced sales became more frequent. Many farms had to be sold below their value, and sometimes a Jewish creditor was the purchaser, or a land speculator, also perhaps a Jew, who by reselling appeared to make, or actually did make, a big profit. The impoverished former owner remained in the village. There his relations lived, for whom he was now working as a labourer, the family keenly resenting the loss of his inherited property and his social position. There might be two such cases in the same village or the same neighbour-

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hood, and if, by chance, the creditors or purchasers in both cases were Jewish, the simple-minded peasants were furious: obviously "the Jews" were to blame. Some of the tradesmen in the smaller towns, who were not feeling well-disposed toward their Jewish competitors, joined in the Jew-baiting. "Well, now you have the reward you deserve, cousin, why did you buy on credit from the Jew?" If a Jewish solicitor had acted on the creditor's behalf, he was equally blamed and hated. His Gentile rival laughed up his sleeve when the peasants and tradesmen began to talk anti-Semitic nonsense, and no longer took their legal business to his Jewish competitor. The Gentile doctor and veterinary surgeon were not sorry when the choice of practitioners was dictated not by regard for efficiency, but by religious prejudice. The fire spread rapidly. An Anti-Semitic Parliamentary Party was founded; propagandist meetings were organised, and there were sporadic outbursts of violence. The legend of Jewish "ritual murders"—the fiction that Jews slaughtered Christian children at Easter, using the blood for their unleavened bread—was whispered, and the centuries-old compilation of the Jewish philosophers, the so-called Talmud, was denounced as a secret Jewish statute by which the State and Christian morals were endangered.

Then a counter-movement began. A League for Combating Anti-Semitism was formed. At meetings, and in popular pamphlets, the inconsistency of anti-Semitism was demonstrated. The accusations relating to ritual murder and the Talmud were refuted by well-known non-Jewish scholars. The work of enlightenment was not without effect. Educated Germans began to feel ashamed of their intolerance. One saw that the Jews could not be reproached with their bias toward trade and the learned professions, as the Gentiles themselves, by the prolonged forcible seclusion of the Jews, were responsible for their one-sided development. Even Bismarck had quickly overcome his instinctive "Teutonic" aversion, and realised that, in due course, the Jews would shake off the remnants of an inferiority complex, which had been artificially impressed upon them, and with their diligence and their desire to get on in the world would constitute a valuable national factor. Thus, it was seen to that violence and lawless baiting was brought before the courts and energetically dealt with. Many Jews, on the other hand, began to see that, in their own interest, it might be better to refrain from struggling too eagerly for success, and to show proper regard for others. Gradually the anti-Semitic tide subsided.

The anti-Semitism of that time still had a religious basis; or at least the racial point of view was not clearly recognised. There

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was little prejudice against "baptised Jews" — though it was not altogether unknown—while it yet hardly occurred to anyone that a Catholic or a Protestant should be regarded as a "Jew" merely because some Jews had been among his ancestors. In general the "better" classes, like the other orders of society, were not strongly opposed to marriages with social equals of Jewish extraction. The Nazi discovery that besides the 500,000 German adherents of the Jewish religion there were, in 1933, two millions of people of Jewish, or partly Jewish, descent in Germany indicates the progress amalgamation had made in the comparatively short period of a century which had expired since the emancipation

By the end of the 19th century there were Christians of Jewish and partly Jewish origin among the higher officials and the owners of large estates. But matters were different in the army. Few objected when an officer married a girl of the wealthy Jewish aristocracy, but the body of officers was reluctant to accept her brother as a comrade. It was an unwritten law that no Jew could obtain the King's Commission as an officer on active service—though he might, in exceptional cases, hold a commission in the reserve—and this applied also to "baptised Jews." at least in the Prussian Army in the narrower sense.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to say how far this attitude was due to positive anti-Semitism, and how far to the traditional exclusiveness of the officer corps combined with a certain misgiving as to the "homogeneous mentality" of aspirants of Jewish extraction. In any case, as, by virtue of their prolonged oppression, the military mentality was alien to the German Jews in general, they did not press very strongly for admission to the officer corps. The same reason may account also for the fact that the number of Jewish N C O.s on active service was extremely small and, consequently, that there were but few Jews among the lower ranks of the civil service, who were drawn mostly from former N C O.s. On the other hand, the historic development, which had produced a high percentage of Jews among the independent business men and in the learned professions, also resulted in the existence of a large proportion of Jews in the other "white-collar jobs" However, the number of Jewish manual labourers was steadily increasing, since, with the beginning of the 20th century, the living conditions of the working class gradually improved.

Such was the position before the Great War. A growing prosperity had played its part in mitigating the competitive struggle among the business men, and in calming people's minds. In the

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<sup>1</sup> The rule was less strictly adhered to in the Bavarian and some other South German army groups.

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small university towns—the temper of which we have already cited as being symptomatic in Germany,<sup>1</sup> and which had for a time been seriously infected with anti-Semitism — the relations between the Gentile and Jewish students were becoming more and more equable, and there were once more many Jews among the most popular university professors.

As to the specific political mentality of the German Jews themselves, the truth is that there was practically no such thing. Apart from a rather small group of extreme Zionists, who refused assimilation on principle, the Jews in Germany shared the political opinions of their particular social groups. All political factions were represented among them, from Toryism to Communism: though Liberalism, which they had to thank for their emancipation, had the greatest number of adherents.

The Great War brought little change in the position of the German Jews. They fulfilled their duty in the field and at home. Many of them fell, or were wounded, many distinguished themselves. While some war profiteers were Jews, the percentage was not exceptionally high.

The active part played by Jews during and after the revolution, in 1918, again corresponded pretty closely to their distribution within the different classes and political parties. Rosa Luxemburg, the Communist, and Kurt Eisner, the extreme “leftist” Social-Democratic Bavarian Prime Minister before the Communist putsch, were Jews. The majority of the Jews, at all events, were on the non-Communist side of the “political abyss”; most of them among the Liberals, Democrats and Socialists. Walter Rathenau was a Liberal Democrat, and so was Preuss, the author of the Constitution of Weimar. Some Jews remained members of the parties of the political Right. A specifically Jewish political mood, apart from their natural common hatred of the growing Nazism, did not develop until the rapid infection of the masses with racial anti-Semitism brought about the complete isolation of the Jews.

No “Jewish question” existed in Germany before Hitler. The fact that in many parts of Germany a disproportionately large number of Jewish doctors, lawyers, and engineers were able to earn a living did not “cry out for a remedy”, it merely proved that no anti-Semitic feelings prevented the bulk of the public from entrusting their physical troubles and their business affairs to Jewish advisers. When Jewish concerns were flourishing, when Jewish publishers were able to found great newspapers—though everyone knew very well that Mosse and Ullstein were of Jewish extraction—could anyone believe

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 61.

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that "the soul of the German people demanded the elimination of the Jews from commerce, and especially from the Press"? A normal person would have concluded, from the prosperous state of these enterprises, that the public had nothing to say against them. Vestiges of the former anti-Semitic prejudice were to be found only among certain groups of competitors and people who for personal reasons were angry with "the Jews."

Then came Hitler's campaign: "Down with the Jews"! The ingenious idea of kindling the lingering sparks of anti-Semitism to a blaze was worthy of the refined and unscrupulous agitator. Here was a visible alien object at which you could point with your finger, against which primitive intolerance could easily be instigated. In the early days of Hitler's Jew-baiting the caustic jest was popular in Germany: "It is the fault of the cyclists and the Jews!" For the Jews were suddenly held responsible for things which had nothing whatever to do with their religion or race, and if anyone denounced "the Jews" for any crime, no evidence of their innocence could help them. Lessing had written a prophetic line in his "Nathan the Sage": "That does not matter; the Jew is to be burned!"

The assertion was suddenly made, by Hitler's propagandists, that the whole Government was "Judaized." "Battle songs" and spoken choruses directed against the "Jewish Republic" became commonplace. A demagogue could hardly do better than to declare that Walther Rathenau, that "arch-representative of world Jewry," had intentionally undermined the resistance in the Ruhr,<sup>1</sup> and even that the inflation was his fault. The facts that Rathenau was murdered by Nazi fanatics before the abortive "passive resistance" and the main inflation had begun, and that the breakdown of resistance, as well as the collapse of the German currency, had posthumously proved the rightness of his policy of fulfilment and reconciliation, did not in the least affect the efficacy of this poisonous method of Jew-baiting. No statistical evidence could avail against the Goebbels propaganda, that during the Great War all Jews had been malingerers, that altogether they were sharks and profiteers, and the other calumnies and invectives, ever fouler and more insensate, which were drummed year after year into the ears of the German masses.

Three main reasons render the Jew-baiting of the Nazis so extremely significant, and make it necessary for us to go into certain of its details and to return to it in various other parts of this book. The first is the fact that outrages, similar to those that had formerly been seen only in certain Polish and Russian districts with a large proportion of culturally backward Jews among a poor, half-civilised,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 31-32, 34-39

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and in great part illiterate, population, now occurred in Germany with her much higher level of education. True, a little bit more of "suitable propagandist preparation" was needed; but finally the ruthlessness and refined cruelty of the campaign of murdering and robbing spread the more rapidly and generally among the Germans. In other words, the higher outward *Kultur* of the Germans proved to be of no avail whatsoever as regards the state of their civilisation. The second reason which makes the Jew-baiting particularly noticeable is the fact that it not only shows how nicely Hitler had estimated the spiritual and moral level of his fellow-countrymen and their susceptibility to the nonsense of a fanatical race hatred, but that here we can observe also something of the close mental interaction between the Leader's own "spirituality" and that of the led.<sup>1</sup> The third point is the significance of the Jew-baiting as the first instance of a practical application of the "race-theory," which later became the basis of the whole Nazi policy of the suppression of "inferior peoples."

In order to realise the pitch of excited fury to which the German people was little by little provoked by the Jew-baiting, we must remember that long before the great pogroms, which will be touched on in a later chapter,<sup>2</sup> the names of the Jews who had fallen in the Great War were erased from the monuments, and the tombstones in the Jewish cemeteries were torn up by fanatical youths. A single example of the filth produced at this time by *Der Stürmer* ("The Storm Trooper"), the newspaper of Hitler's most intimate friend, the Gauleiter Streicher, will show to what sadistic excesses this agitation was leading. The *Stürmer* first described, with all disgusting particulars, how a Jewish cattle-dealer, who had been accused of having sexual intercourse with an "Aryan" girl, was assaulted one night, castrated like a pig, and found next morning lying in a ditch. The newspaper then asserted, with obvious satisfaction, that "the operation was performed by an expert, and the parts removed, wrapped in a sheet of newspaper, were put into the man's waistcoat pocket." Many newspapers and periodicals with similar contents and revolting illustrations were sold with impunity during the following period in enormous numbers, and did their part in destroying every sense of decency and systematically building up the spirit of hooliganism.

The cunning foresight with which Hitler had counted on the covetousness of his compatriots was confirmed by the magnificent success of the economic exploitation of anti-Semitism for the purposes of the movement. It began with the farmers. True, these were

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 92, 134-141

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 127, 139.



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hard up once again when the inflation ceased. The prices of agricultural products were unsatisfactory, as, in the interest of the industrial workers, grain could be imported at a low tariff, while the farmers had to pay dearly for the manufactured goods they needed. A so-called "price-scissors" was the result, and discontent with the Government was extreme among the farmers. It had come even to the point of refusals to pay their taxes, and to open revolts, particularly on the occasion of forced sales. As among the creditors of the peasants, of course, there were again some Jews, nothing was easier than, according to the pattern of the nineties, to arouse and direct their fury against the "Jewish bloodsuckers," with the sole difference that this time the spite was not confined to the Jewish creed but extended to the whole Jewish race. It was highly convenient, and quite "amusing," if a speaker at a political meeting, instead of entering upon a boring discussion of economic problems, should simply blame "Isidor" for the whole policy of the government, and "Cohn" for the ruin of the farmers. Better still, the speaker might remind his audience that, forty years earlier, the father of the man whose farm was now put up to auction had been dragged into court by another Jew, and that even then the famous "Father of anti-Semitism," Ahlwardt,<sup>1</sup> had warned the people against the Jewish vampires. The son had forgotten that warning, and now he himself had become the "pitiful victim of the Jews." A round of smirking applause from the "Aryan" tradesmen ensued, and enthusiastic cheers from such peasants as themselves, perhaps, were in debt to a Jewish dealer, and were just trying to think of an excuse to evade payment. The strategical idea indicated by the orator was indeed magnificent. being simply to prevent a Jewish creditor from pressing his claim by threatening that, if he did so, he would not only lose his customers and his money, but would be beaten up into the bargain. At the very moment, perhaps, the "victim," whose absence the speaker had regretfully noted, was sitting in the office of the alleged vampire, discussing the means of avoiding ruin in the interests of both.

In the meantime whispers had reached the orator informing him that the neighbouring estate now belonged to the banker Meyer of Berlin. Perhaps the speaker could tell them whether Meyer, too, was a Jew? At all events he seemed to have a lot of money; for he had bought the derelict estate from the heirs of the late squire, had built new stables and labourers' cottages, purchased a first-class herd of cattle, and put up a modern dairy, which was now delivering milk, butter, and cream directly to hotels and restaurants in the metropolis.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 23

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By so doing he got much better prices for his produce, and, indeed, the farm was now in excellent condition. However, the speaker must not say who it was that had told him about Meyer, they didn't want any unpleasantness! This "information," duly digested, might assume the following form when the agitator was addressing a meeting in a neighbouring district "The usurer Meyer has now the typically Jewish impudence to ape the German squire! What is Isidor doing? First he lent a small sum to the former squire, at usurious interest, and so contrived things that he was able to buy the fine estate, the manor house, the new buildings, and the famous livestock, for a mere song, and pop it into his dirty Jewish bag. The old squire was even compelled to build a costly new dairy on the insidious advice of this Jewish devil, before he shot himself, in his grief, as he was bound to do, because he couldn't bear to see in Jewish hands the entail he had inherited from his ancestors. How long will it be before the Jew has destroyed this fine old German estate by his maladministration—how long before the new workmen's dwellings which testify to the generous social sentiment of the former squire present the sort of spectacle to which the Jew is accustomed in his home country in Poland?" Thunderous applause!

Before long Jewish farmers, boycotted as a result of such agitation, were lucky if they could sell their property at a loss to some Nazi chief. Not a few of them, who could not resolve quickly enough to tear up their roots from the soil on which they had become indigenous, were driven from house and home by 1933, or were murdered. For, let it be repeated, all these things happened years *before* the great pogroms.

The small and middle-sized towns, hotbeds of gossip and jealousy, were the best breeding-ground for commercial anti-Semitism. Here, where, in any case, competitors did not look favourably at each other, some relics of the former anti-Jewish movement could still be found. If it so happened that a Jewish merchant or professional man was not an habitu   of the private bar frequented by members of the upper class, they could libel the "Jewish trickster" without embarrassment. If he was a member of the regular beer-table society, his rivals could easily find some "true-blooded German" who no longer cared to sit at the same table with the "dirty Jew." Sometimes it was a solicitor who seized the opportunity to make it clear to possible clients that their pockets would suffer if they went into court with a Jewish lawyer. The patients of the Jewish doctors found it wise to go elsewhere for medical advice, and little by little this method of ostracising the Jews developed into

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a highly profitable business. In the larger towns, too, where, in the beginning, many clients and patients had been loyal to their Jewish doctors and solicitors, the "Aryan" colleagues, their appetites whetted by greed, realised how their affairs would flourish if they could remove all Jewish competition at a stroke, and before long they were swelling the ranks of Hitler's followers.

The anti-Jewish propaganda promised a rich pecuniary harvest: "The Jews must be expelled from the public service and the learned professions. They must make room for the young party members who are struggling to establish themselves." What prospects opened before the eyes of all the lawyers—the solicitors, barristers, notaries, syndics, magistrates—and other officials! One had only to join the Party in order to be among the first to benefit by the posts now falling vacant! What opportunities for all the doctors, the dentists and veterinary surgeons, when the Jews had been forced to abandon their practices! Not a moment must be lost in joining the Party! For engineers, technicians, architects, artists, teachers, university professors, the watchword was "Join! Join!" None were better able to exploit the economic opportunities of anti-Semitism than the members of the learned professions. The senseless pretexts for the elimination of their Jewish colleagues—the arguments that they were unworthy of any confidence, that the physical health and the personal or business affairs of a German could not be entrusted to a Jewish doctor, dentist, or solicitor, or the bodily welfare of a German cow to a Jewish veterinary surgeon — were eagerly accepted and exploited by these worthy gentlemen, who, in addition, began to feel that they had a legitimate grievance against those of their fellow-countrymen who did not share such opinions. In their avarice they did not hesitate to deny the rudimentary liberty of a man to choose his doctor or his lawyer for himself. But the elimination of Jewish competition was still not enough. The practices which the Jewish doctors and lawyers had built up by years of hard work were too valuable to be lost. They must have the practices together with the consulting-rooms, the offices, the dwelling-houses of the Jews, who ought to be grateful if their successors were prepared to take over their premises, since they were, in any case, forbidden to dwell under the same roof with "Aryans". The Jews might think themselves fortunate if they could pocket a few marks in return for their instruments, books, and furniture. For the purchase of a practice from a Jew was prohibited by "professional honour"; it was to be a windfall to the "Aryan successor".

Look at these doctors and lawyers—thought the Nazis: what a useful addition to the Party, what a lot of money they pour into

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its tills! Why stop at the learned professions? Of course, the Jews must be turned out of every branch of the nation's economic life!

"Jewish employees must be turned out of the banks, the warehouses, the factories! Our watchword is. No Aryan works beside a Jew! How many well-paid posts will thus become vacant! You have only to join the Party! Walk up! Walk up! Join! Join!"

Fraulein Giete told her fiancé. "Yesterday my brother joined the Party. He is a made man now. The moment they are at the helm he will get his appointment. In your firm the Jewish confidential clerk will certainly be kicked out. That would be just the post for you! Oh, Adolf, then we could get married! But you must join the Party at once! Join! Join!"

"Do not buy from the Jews! No German money ought to flow into the pockets of Jewish profiteers! The Party cannot permit Aryan employees to be under the influence of Jewish employers, nor any of Germany's raw materials to be manufactured in Jewish factories. Jewish competition in the commercial world must cease! Every Jewish business must be closed!"

What an opportunity to "acquire" Jewish businesses for nothing, or next to nothing! "Only think, Emilie, if I could get hold of that splendid concern of Cohn's with its magnificent patents, its new machines, and all its foreign connections! We could fix our own prices—there would be no competition any more! What profits we could make!"—"Yes, but first of all you must join the Party! How long ago did I tell you that?—And why shouldn't you? The Meyers and the Schulzes have been members from the first. If you don't join up now, Cohn's factory will be snatched up by someone else!"—"You are quite right, Emilie; I'll join at once!"

Advertising agents might well grow pale with envy at the success of the anti-Semitic propaganda—and of the Party newspapers belonging to the Nazi chiefs. Camouflaged by the most hypocritical of all the Nazi slogans—"Common interest must prevail over private interest"—commercial anti-Semitism, by appealing to the basest avarice, soon proved the stoutest pillar of Nazi agitation.

It would certainly have been better if all Jews had remembered the lesson of the anti-Semitic movement of the nineties—that restraint in public life, correctness of behaviour, deference to others in business, and the avoidance of all open display of wealth in private life, were measures of prudence for them. No doubt there were crooked traders among them. No doubt also many Jews were wanting in tact and their behaviour made it easier for the Nazis to exploit the misdemeanours of the few. For all that, one cannot

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justly speak even of contributory negligence on the part of the Jews. For the shortcomings of a minority were not really responsible for an outbreak which the Nazis would have provoked in any case—even if their victims had been blameless. The general reaction to Hitler's Jew-baiting shows clearly how thin a crust of *Kultur* covered the half-civilised German mentality, and how well the Nazi gangsters knew where that crust could best be pierced.

It may be useful at this juncture once more to point briefly to the wider aspects of this earlier stage of Jew-baiting during Hitler's ascent. As to the evolution of the German mentality, we have already indicated that the ulterior purpose of the campaign went far beyond its immediate psychological object of making the Germans subservient to their Agitator-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> This, so to speak, preliminary Jew-baiting was a means of "inuring" the minds of the Germans for greater things to come, for all the long preconceived atrocities—not only those connected with the later extermination of the Jews, but also those committed in the conquered countries and in connection with the operations of "total warfare." It served to evoke that "Gestapo mentality" which gradually became a common asset of the German people, and especially of the German Youth.<sup>2</sup> Even as regards the Jews, a period of skilful preparation was necessary, until, by 1938, the Germans were ready, after they had squeezed the last drops of juice from the financial lemon,<sup>3</sup> to force those Jews who were considered to be strong enough to labour as slaves, working to their last gasp in the deadly phosphorus mines at Mauthausen and elsewhere, to kill many others as "control-rabbits,"<sup>4</sup> and to deport the rest, as human offal, to the slaughterhouses of the East, where they could still be used to train the German soldier-executioners in the best methods of mass-murder.<sup>5</sup> Even the former optimists may have learnt by now what was the moral effect upon the Germans of Hitler's Jew-baiting. Moreover, the magnificent results obtained in Germany led the Nazis to make Jew-baiting their chief instrument of political agitation in foreign countries. In those parts of Eastern Europe where anti-Semitism was endemic, the instigation of a new campaign against the Jews was obviously the best method of undermining democratic government. When "so highly civilised" a people as the Germans assured one that the robbing and killing of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 68

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 206, 252-256

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 100-101, 140

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 124-131

<sup>5</sup>Cf p 92

<sup>6</sup>Cf pp. 135 (note 3), 136

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their Jewish fellow-countrymen was justified, both morally and scientifically, there was surely no reason why one should any longer be tender of one's own Jews, or of the "Judaized," democratic governments. But in Western Europe also, as in certain parts of America, anti-Semitism was a most valuable weapon in the arsenals of the Fifth Columns.<sup>1</sup> Wherever the spiritual soil was barren of genuine civilisation the seed of race hatred was bound to grow luxuriantly.

## CHAPTER V

### THE "WORLD-PHILOSOPHY OF NAZISM." THE MENTALITY OF THE LEARNED IN THE "THIRD REICH"

*Essence and purpose of the dictated "Weltanschauung" — Its destructive influence on ethics and religion — Situation of the Christian Churches — Subservience of the sciences to the State — The "auxiliary" sciences — The racial theory — Nazi education — The German scholars.*

#### I

It is a truism that philosophy and science cannot flourish save in perfect freedom, and that it must be the leading principle in their relations with the State that the sciences, while they can help to set the national administration on the right path, should never yield, whether in matters of research or in their teaching, to the wishes of the government, or to any restrictions imposed by it. But the hope that the struggle for this ideal, which began in the days of the Inquisition, had virtually ended in our own time with the general recognition of the liberty of the social and natural sciences, proved vain in so far as the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian countries were concerned. As to Germany, complete freedom was granted to philosophy and the sciences only during the brief period of the Republic of Weimar. Even in Imperial Germany, however, a certain restraint of interference had been observed; control had been limited mainly to history, politics, and legal theory. The Nazis were less "considerate." Immediately after their seizure of power they proclaimed officially that all research and all teaching had no

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 256-259, 262.

#### THE "WORLD-PHILOSOPHY OF NAZISM"

higher purpose and no other moral justification than to serve the superior interests of the German State.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, they proceeded at once to make every branch of knowledge a means of muzzling, instead of liberating, the minds of the German subjects. Moreover, by way of aggravating the perniciousness of their doctrine, the Leader alone, as the "integral realisation of the State," had henceforth to define its ends, and he decided no less autocratically how the sciences must "co-operate" to achieve them. This meant, translated into plain language, and also in actual practice, that Hitler—just as he enacted and sovereignly interpreted the laws<sup>2</sup>—not merely gave the general direction in which the social and natural sciences were to pursue their researches, but ordered in detail what they were to discover, and what was taboo for them—what they were to teach and what conceal from their pupils. The scientific dictatorship—implicit already in the definition of the totalitarian State, and, so that any possible misconception might be avoided, impressed upon the minds of all scientists by innumerable decrees—was by no means merely a phrase. From the outset, German philosophy and science were enslaved by the Nazi régime, and thus became ever more and more intellectually dissociated from their international connections. In international science Germany was more and more exclusively represented by those who, expelled by the Nazis, had found an asylum in other countries. Nazi science itself, in its arrogant myopia, confirmed, and still further emphasized, this progressive isolation. In 1936, e.g., it re-dedicated to the "German" Spirit the new university buildings in Heidelberg, which—erected chiefly with the help of American funds—had originally been dedicated to the "Eternal" Spirit.

The aim of making the sciences subservient to the State was achieved by decreeing that a new, dictated Nazi "world-philosophy" was henceforth to form the basis of all research and teaching. It need not be said that to dictate a philosophy is a contradiction in terms: not only does a "world-philosophy" itself become a Dead Sea fruit the moment its free development is restricted—it is also bound to act as a deadly poison in every branch of research and teaching if a scholar, whatever his specialty, is forced to attune the results of his researches to a dictated general doctrine, and to twist his convictions into agreement with the official "supreme truth."

Now, what was the content of this *Weltanschauung*? We have pointed out already that its sole object was to serve as a fundamental basis of Nazism, and that it had, in particular, to provide

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 48-50

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 118.

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the philosophical justification of the pan-German claim of the "young" nation, first to Nazify Germany, and then, under the command of her deified Leader, to conquer, reform, and dominate the world. The "world-philosophy" derived this claim from a pretended German "mission"—crystallised in the Barbarossa legend—which, so we were assured, had exalted the Germans to be a lordly, chosen people—a "Herrenvolk." But why? Nobody could really say; we had to content ourselves with the initial hypothesis, which seemed to imply a new species of fatalism or determinism. But, in addition to this mystical source, the world-philosophy had acquired a modern "scientific" foundation. This was a blend of a highly exaggerated version of Nietzsche's doctrine of the right of the stronger, as a "law of nature," with the German "race theory." The latter again had a mystical origin. It was traced back to an old doctrine of "national blood" which had been exploited by "Meister Eckhart," a German Dominican Prior of the 13th century, in the struggle against the Papal assertion of temporal power, and which, it was claimed, was also the source of the Nazi theory of "blood and soil."<sup>2</sup> Again, as it was obviously felt that the racial basis of the world-philosophy needed a little more material underpinning, the German "scientists," in order to give the thing a smattering of modern learning, produced out of the void by means of untenable inferences, "biological proof" of the pretended racial superiority of their fellow countrymen.<sup>3</sup> The pan-German-racialist mixture was then enriched with some no less dubious ingredients of his own devising by the Nazi World-Philosopher-in-Chief, Rosenberg. Denying any place to individualism in the new, allegedly "heroic" epoch, he proclaimed "Freedom and Honour"—both, of course, of the German variety<sup>4</sup>—as the "Supreme Value" of the "Herrenvolk"; and he subordinated to this "Hochstwert," in conscious opposition to Christian ethics, all other values, including religion, morals, and law. This seems to be, in plain English, the essence of the concoction which was published as the new, obligatory, German *Weltanschauung* in Rosenberg's *Myth of the 20th Century*.

If — at a time when this was yet possible — one pointed out that this whole "world-philosophy," with its basic claim of German superiority, was nothing more than an immoral appeal to national

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 52-56. Incidentally, it is difficult to understand why the German nation was persistently described by the Nazis as an especially "young" one. If this attribute was meant to indicate that the "nation" first came into existence on Hitler's "seizure of power," or, perhaps, on Bismarck's "welding" of the Reich, this would hardly agree with the much cherished Barbarossa myth.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 97-99.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. pp. 55-56, 142-150, 155-156.



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and personal intolerance, vanity and covetousness, and a glorification of brute force, and that the claim of racial superiority itself was contrary to all the scientific evidence, one received the simple answer that "only a German possessed the sentimental faculties necessary for the full perception of the new philosophy, which could not be explained, but must be felt."<sup>1</sup> It hardly needs saying that this apparently unanswerable objection was nothing more than an arrogant evasion. Every clear-sighted German or non-German thinker was, of course, not only able and entitled — nay, obliged — to form his own judgment of a philosophy which brought disaster upon the world. It is obvious also that this grandiose and tendentious attempt to confound all normal and reasonable axioms could gain nothing by a reference to the mystical arguments of a friar of the early Middle Ages, or by misusing the name and distorting the ideas—objectionable enough as they were in themselves—of a great but one-sided and, probably, mentally unsound philosopher.<sup>2</sup> The absurdity of the argument, which took the hypothesis as test,<sup>3</sup> became obvious when the Nazi philosophers, with the help of an unproven racial theory, laid claim to a superior strength, and then, from a pretended law of nature, derived the "conclusion" that they were entitled to subdue all other peoples. This was indeed their inference, and it is worth while to note that it coincided with the logic both of Siegfried, when he demanded Gunther's kingdom,<sup>4</sup> and of the megalomaniac "Führer," who considered everyone a rebel who dared to resist his "right" of the stronger.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, there is no doubt that this sort of logic appealed to the general mood of the German people, so that, after all, the assertion that "only a genuine German mind" could appreciate the new philosophy had some truth in it—though the inevitable conclusions, as regards the "pure German mentality," are not precisely favourable.

But the lack of logic was not the worst defect of the popular mentality. Far more deplorable was the fact that the Germans were utterly unconscious of the moral disgrace of their relying on a pretended "right" of the stronger; that they were obviously unable to understand that the question as to how far the alleged law prevails in inanimate nature, and among the lower animals, has nothing whatever to do with human standards. It is this almost naïve repudiation of all moral considerations which proves that we are not merely indulging in polemics if we stress the point that Nazism was

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 47-48

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p 59

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 55-56

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Cf p 219

in actual truth a revival in a modernised form of primitive perceptions, of the habits of bygone, pre-Christian centuries, which could be offered as a progressive way of life only to a people in a low state of civilisation. This should always be kept in mind with regard to our later suggestions as to the necessary re-education of the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

We must return, at this juncture, to the extreme intolerance of the German world-philosophy. The claim of superiority would of itself make it clear that the Nazis preferred a world poisoned by the inevitable hatred of the suppressed to one made tolerable by the principle "live and let live." Apart from this, it appears from almost every chapter of our enquiry that intolerance is one of the most characteristic ingredients of Nazism, as it is likewise a principal trait of the German mentality.<sup>2</sup> But this natural relationship was not enough. We must not fail to note the cunning with which the "world-philosophy" utilised the primitive aversion evoked in the half-educated and half-civilised as an instinctive protest against subtler and more spiritualised ideals, in order to direct the common hatred against all those tendencies and movements which—like Christianity, Liberalism, Internationalism, Socialism, Freemasonry, etc.—postulate an inherent tolerance, and were thus regarded by the promoters of the "world-philosophy" as the natural adversaries of all that Nazism really meant.

As our theoretical interest in the "world-philosophy" is limited to giving the reader a sufficient general impression of it, which will enable him to judge for himself its spiritual and moral value, and to understand its relation to the German mentality, we need say no more in so far as the "general principles" of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* are concerned. But the fact must never be overlooked that this vague combination of mysticism, chauvinism, high-sounding aims, and alleged biological and other discoveries, whose inner hollowness and immorality were camouflaged by a philosophical jargon and impressive professorial rhetoric, satisfied the spiritual requirements of German students, just as the mystical babble of certain second-rate German philosophers and pseudo-philosophers had already, at an earlier period, exercised a fatal influence on German youth.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, it cannot be denied also that once again a few befogged and speculative thinkers in other countries<sup>4</sup> have been deluded; though, generally speaking, outside

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 312.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 7

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 22-23, 52-53.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 54.

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Germany itself, the Nazi "transvaluation of moral values"<sup>1</sup> has been estimated according to its real worth. But, apart from the "general principles," the following summary, which the scheme of this book will not permit us to exceed, may give some impression of the devastating influence which the "world-philosophy" has exercised not only on religion and ethics, but on almost every single branch of learning. The survey, given in later chapters, of the practical achievements of Nazism will show the pernicious effects, direct and indirect, of this compulsory *Weltanschauung* in other spheres of public and private life.

## II

It took a long time before it was generally understood that the German claim to racial superiority and the proclamation of the right of the strongest as a "law of nature" meant a plain denial of the very foundation of Christianity—the equality of all human beings before God and the duty to assist our weaker brethren. The subordination of religion and ethics to the "supreme racial value" in Rosenberg's official statement of the world-philosophy, and its disdain of the Christian virtues of love and humility, confirmed the fact that no compromise was ever imaginable between Christian ethics and the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. Thus it was obvious that the new "German Christianity," a creed "remoulded," by the Nazi Bishop Muller, according to the requirements of the world-philosophy, could not deserve its name. Muller's "German Christianity," like the credo of some similar, allegedly Christian, sects which the Nazis approved, was in fact the very antithesis of Christianity, the name constituting a blasphemy in itself. Even so, the admission of a "German Christianity" was only intended as a temporary concession to lull the scruples of "timid souls of an elder generation," who were dismayed by the renunciation of all Christian tradition. When the "Hitler Youth"<sup>2</sup> were admitted into the highest class of the hierarchy and initiated into the secrets of the Nazi movement, they were taught that it was the chief purpose of the rising generation to extirpate "decadent Christianity" from the German nation, and they had to take a solemn vow never to attend a church, never to be married with a religious ceremony, and not to allow their future children to be baptised.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 57-58, 94, 100, 139, 170, 195.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 100-101

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For all this, Nazi theory claimed that it did not interfere with the "metaphysical belief of the individual." In fact, not only all congregations, but every private individual had to accept the world-philosophy as basis of all his thoughts. The individual was "free" only to derive the obligatory belief in the "German destiny," either immediately from the over-simplified Nazi version of the theory of evolution, combined with the "Nietzschean" doctrine of the right of the stronger and with the racial dogma, or he might follow Muller's "Christianity," or Ludendorff's or Rosenberg's "natural religion," and adopt a modernised worship of Wotan and a mystical idolatry of the slain German heroes in Valhalla. The crucial point is that all these optional approaches to the prescribed belief in the "German destiny" allowed for the virtual deification of the Leader.

After this, need it be said that it was no "Christian" theology, but mere heresy which was taught under Nazi rule in the German evangelical faculties of the State Universities?

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It may be convenient at this juncture to add a few remarks as to the situation of the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Germany and the general attitude of the clergy under the Nazi régime. This may also help us to obtain an impression of the religious mentality of the present German generation. We have to return to this subject when considering, at a later stage, the problem of Germany's ethical re-education.<sup>1</sup>

The number of true Protestants in Germany, before the World War, has generally been overestimated, and the damage already done by the Nazis was never sufficiently appreciated abroad. One has to realise the fact that by 1939 only those far from numerous congregations and those steadfast clergymen could still be regarded as Christians who adhered either to Pastor Niemöller's Church,<sup>2</sup> or to one or two other similar and no less persecuted organisations. The others, who — most of them out of respect for "tradition" — had refrained from openly renouncing the Christian faith, but had preferred rather to enter one of the officially tolerated congregations, had hardly anything in common with Christianity.

There was no longer a rising generation of faithful priests. The courses of instruction and the examinations for young theologians which Pastor Niemöller had organised, fully realising the conditions

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 314-317

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 120, 137, 209

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at the universities, were forcibly suppressed by the Nazis. Little is known even now of the fate of those evangelical-confessional communities which, up to the war, had kept faith in spite of all the pressure brought to bear upon them. But it can be assumed that in the dilemma between their feelings as opponents of Nazism, and the consideration that in time of war they must obey the commands of the German Leader, the majority may have decided for the latter course. It depended almost entirely upon some martyrs who, when the war began, were either, like Pastor Niemöller, imprisoned in the concentration camps, or who, robbed of their salaries, struggled desperately to fulfil their duty under conditions of the greatest dangers, how much of the Protestant Faith would survive in Luther's homeland.

The Nazis were less successful in interfering with the German Catholics owing to a greater internal compactness of the single congregations and the stronger organisation of their hierarchy, and also because of the concordat concluded by Hitler at the beginning of his Leadership, which, though often violated, has never been officially dissolved. It may also be ascribed in part to the inconsistency of Hitler's personal attitude that Catholicism has withstood with comparatively better success the strong and manifold pressure brought to bear upon the people, inciting them to denounce the Christian faith. Despite the aggressiveness of the Party—the monstrous charges brought against monks and nuns, the "battle songs" of the Hitler Youth, which called for the "hanging of all Catholic priests," and the attacks upon Catholic churches, monasteries, and episcopal palaces, and also despite the occasional hostile utterances and quotations of the "Führer," as e.g., "who eats the Pope's food, dies of it"—despite all this, Hitler himself, significantly enough, has never openly renounced the Catholic faith. At times when it seemed opportune to appease the German Catholics, this fact could be exploited in a sort of half-official whispering campaign. Immediately after the attack on Russia it was even rumoured that the Leader intended—when the victory was won—to entrust the Catholic Church with the apostolic mission of re-Christianising Russia. At the same time, it was apparent that Hitler, once more following Mussolini's crafty example, was endeavouring by various concessions to win over the Catholic hierarchy. It was said then that "Father Odo," an ex-officer and a scion of a princely family—his original title was Duke Charles Alexander of Württemberg—was going to South America as Hitler's personal and secret emissary. Shortly before the outbreak of the war this priest was still posing as a vigorous opponent of the pagan philosophy of the Nazis, and he had even succeeded in obtaining a

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gift of some thousands of pounds from Lord Baldwin's Refugee Fund in aid of the persecuted German Catholics.

The case of "Father Odo" is significant, not only as an example of the refined perfidy of the Nazi rulers, who, while they were crucifying genuine piety, made use of an ambitious priest in order to beguile the minds of Christians at home and abroad. It should have been a warning to those who relied on the short-sighted prophecies of certain writers that, in war-time, a vigorous counter-movement against the Nazi régime might be expected from the side of the German Catholics, a self-deception which was revived when, in the summer of 1944, it became known that some of the leading members of the abortive officers' conspiracy had been Catholics. "Father Odo's" case—and there are more of a similar kind—illustrates the typical German genius for "forgetfulness," as soon as their national passions are aroused; and in this respect there is hardly a difference between the adherents of the two great Christian denominations. Misguided nationalism, so deeply rooted in the German mentality, was the primary cause of such defections both in the case of Protestant pastors outside the "Confessional Church," and in that of the Catholic clergy who yielded to the temptation of compromising with the Nazis, while it was obvious that any Nazi approach to one of the Christian confessions could never signify anything more than an opportunistic attempt to achieve political ends. We should appreciate the valour with which men like the Bishops of Münster and Berlin, von Galen and von Preysing, publicly condemned the outrages of the Gestapo and the injustice prevailing in Germany. But such protests never indicated an imminent revolt in war-time, or even the passive resistance, apart from the religious sphere, of the faithful against the Nazi régime. Both these Bishops, like the other German priests, were still praying and striving for a German victory. What we might have deduced from their attitude was no more than the simple fact that in the Catholic community, as in the Evangelical Church, there were still religious leaders who were opposed to the Nazi philosophy, and whose influence would help us to restore a genuine Christianity in a future Germany.

The fact, however, remains that during the war the great majority even of religious-minded Germans—including, unfortunately, many faithful priests—silenced, in a spirit of misconceived patriotism, the protests of their conscience against the aims and methods of Nazi warfare. This circumstance, and — *inter alia* — the appalling conclusions to be drawn from the truculent behaviour of numerous German prisoners of war, and the state of mind of many wounded soldiers, who have preferred to die with the name of Hitler on their

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lips rather than that of Christ, is not very encouraging as regards the prospects of our faith in post-war Germany—at all events, in so far as the present generation is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

### III

REVERTING to the immediate object of this chapter, we now propose to examine briefly the practical application of the "world-philosophy" in various branches of learning and in the Nazi administration. For, as mentioned before, the German system of philosophy was far from being merely theoretical.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, we may observe here a paramount example of the disastrous results which must always occur when a State-dictated doctrine not only governs the sciences, but also has to justify the outrages of an evil administration: which in return refers to the authority of the official philosophy

As far as ethics are concerned, so much has been said already about the abyss dividing the Christian ideology from the Nazi "morality" that we can restrict ourselves to a few illuminating examples:—

"Push what is going to fall!" This dangerous maxim of Nietzsche's—especially dangerous in German practice, because it was here the pusher himself who arbitrarily decided what was about to fall—constituted a corner-stone of the Nazi morality. It was exploited not only in order to deny and ridicule the Christian virtues of renunciation and altruism, but also to reverse completely all that is implied in Kant's "categorical imperative." Let us take the small section of "medical ethics"—out of the vast and all-pervading field of morals—in order to demonstrate the effect of the "new" atavistic philosophy upon a moral principle of such primary importance as the sanctity of human life in all its forms. The forcible sterilisation of imbeciles was an immediate application of the doctrine that "the falling" had to be "pushed" "For the benefit of a sound people the deliberate destruction of the vital powers of the individual must be regarded as admissible." In so far as undoubted idiots were in question, this seemed to be, at first glance, a debatable issue. It was, in fact, the first step upon the downward path. The sterilisation, in the "interest of a sound race," of those non-Aryan partners of "mixed marriages" who, for any reason, were not doomed to extermination, was the next, and also many criminals, who undoubtedly were no idiots, were, for the same reason, made incapable of procreation. The Christian principle of the sanctity of human life having once been abandoned, it was only a further logical consequence that the medical

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 315-317

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 203.

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profession should feel itself entitled to kill certain categories of the insane—a departure which entailed the destruction of many thousands of human beings. Simultaneously the doctrine of “euthanasia” was adopted, and it has been reported from a reliable source that great numbers of wounded soldiers who could not be restored to full health were killed. But there were worse incidents to show the relapse into barbarism of German medical “ethics.” Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that “in the interest of science” political prisoners have been subjected to vivisection, a fact which exposed the German statute forbidding the dissection of any living creature, and the pet propaganda of the Nazis, which advocated kindness towards animals, as mere hypocrisy. Earlier still many Jews had been put to death in the capacity of experimentation rabbits, and also—under medical supervision—in order to try out the best mixtures of poison gases and the methods of application. Although we are concerned here merely with the medical aspect of ethics, it may be mentioned incidentally that the killing, at a later stage, of hundreds of thousands of human beings in gas chambers and by other means comes under the same general “ethical” principle that “everything was allowed for the sake of a sound German race.” This principle would admit of the mass-extirpation of “noxious people”—including the “ineducable” intelligentsia of the conquered countries and, indeed, of all who protested against German oppression<sup>1</sup>—as readily as of the murder of a perfectly innocent but “racially undesirable” individual.

The willing co-operation of German medical men in such outrages throws a further significant spotlight upon the moral decay of a formerly reputable profession which was bound to result from the adoption of the Nazi philosophy, a decay which, from another standpoint, had already become visible when the “Aryan” doctors had appropriated the practices of their Jewish colleagues. This event, incidentally, meant much more than merely an act of robbery against the Jewish doctors, inasmuch as—simultaneously with the cancellation of their licences — Jewish patients had been excluded from all public and private clinics in Germany, and only a few Jewish practitioners were allowed to work as “medical attendants of sick Jews.” Thus—long before the mass extermination was enacted—many Jews were faced with the alternative of dying without aid or of calling in a Nazi doctor, whom the new ethics had already taught that the “Jewish vermin” must be helped to die as quickly as possible. This detail of the tragedy of the German Jews — small

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 116, 136.



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as it may appear in the ocean of German atrocities<sup>1</sup>—is particularly illustrative of the way in which what many had believed to be "mere theories" were, little by little, developed into a terrible practice, and of the way in which everywhere Nazi theory and practice co-operated in replacing genuine ethics by the new barbarism of the master race.

The second example will show the disintegrating effect of the Nazi philosophy on sexual ethics, and on the sanctity of the marriage bond. There was a steady increase of promiscuity to be observed in pre-war Nazi Germany—long before war conditions produced a similar, though less extreme, decline of sexual restraint in other countries. It was an obvious consequence of the continuous sneering at Christian ethics by all German teachers, and of the methodical estrangement, by the compulsory youth organisations, of the adolescents of both sexes from church and family life; until, eventually, it was officially proclaimed that the "national duty of every German girl to produce children" was by no means dependent on marriage — one man being sufficient for twenty women.<sup>2</sup> The *Gauleiter* of annexed Luxembourg, in an official speech to girls who were to be deported to Germany for forced labour, declared that they should regard it as an honour if they should return pregnant.<sup>3</sup>

The disastrous effect upon sexual morality produced by the practical application of the world-philosophy and racial theory is drastically exposed by the incredible baseness with which, in the enslaved countries, married women and girls of the "inferior" races have been forced into the German war brothels. Still more revealing, however—with respect to the immediate interaction between doctrine and practical policy—is this passage from a book<sup>4</sup> which the German Police Chief in Norway published confidentially for the use of the highest Nazi officials. It speaks of the German efforts to "create for future generations, by way of selective breeding between German soldiers and racially desirable<sup>5</sup> Norwegian girls, 20 to 30 further divisions to defend the conquered space." The German troops of occupation in Norway—and it must be remembered that Norway was garrisoned by 300,000 men, and that altogether a million German soldiers may have spent some time in that country—were promised that their womenfolk and relatives at home would not learn of their illegitimate connections, and that they would be exempted from all financial liability in respect of children begotten. A special organisation, the "Lebensborn," was formed in order to bring the soldiers and the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 135

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p 231.

<sup>3</sup>White Book on Punishment for War Crimes, H M Stationery Office, 1943, p 22.

<sup>4</sup>Rediess, *SS für Gross-Deutschland, Schwert und Wiege* (SS for Greater Germany, Sword and Cradle).

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp 96-97

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girls of Norway together by means of free concerts, cinema performances, etc. Again, one may well ask those who were not very greatly perturbed by the "merely theoretical" abolition of Christian morals, whether they have yet realised that the proclamation of the new "world-philosophy" by the Nazis rang the knell of German morality.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of the "world-philosophy," however, was by no means confined to ethics. The arts, the law, and almost all branches of human knowledge, were directly and indirectly affected. More, they were not merely ruined themselves—they were pressed into the service of the new creed in spreading spiritual corruption. As we have seen, there were no longer to be any independent and self-sufficient sciences, it was henceforth their common and primary purpose to give support to the Nazi philosophy and to help the Nazi State to achieve its ends—although, of course, this did not prevent the Nazi scholars from priding themselves upon the old, cherished, but now apparently "transvaluated" maxim: "To be a German means to do a thing for its own sake."

The future aim and purpose of all knowledge was symbolised, so to speak, by the charter and the activities of the Institute of Geo-Politics in Munich.<sup>2</sup> This centre and university of Pan-Germanism, under the leadership of General von Haushofer, determined, by setting an example, the direction, and outlined the paths, which all sciences had henceforth to follow. Political economy, economics, and history were virtually degraded to the status of auxiliary sciences of the Pan-Germanist "world-philosophy." Their students and teachers had not only to accommodate their researches and their teaching to the totalitarian principles: they had further to make it their special object in lectures and publications to represent Germany as the focus and pivot of the world; they had to prove the legitimacy of the German claim to world domination, and, in particular, to furnish the "scientific" evidence that the monstrous "geo-political" offspring of the world philosophy, the German New Order, was justified in the truest interests of mankind.

As to history, one could follow simply the old Prussian system of tendentiously distorted instruction.<sup>3</sup> But the Nazis went much farther than this, eliminating or inverting everything which was not fully in accordance with the dogma of the chosen German people. Modern history had henceforth to be taught on the lines of the extreme nationalist historian Treitschke, which tells enough to all

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also the White Book of the Polish Government in London, on German "Kultur." (H.M. Stationery Office, 1945).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 9, 51, 57, 87, 101, 139, 170, 195.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 53, 193-195.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. pp. 13, 82-83.

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who know his work. In so far as Hitler, in his book and his speeches, had presented the German people with the infallible results of his own historical explorations, they had, of course, to be accepted by all teachers as inspired revelations. What sacrifices of conscience and what mental acrobatics this demanded may be imagined by anyone familiar with the addresses in which the "Führer" expounded his peculiar theories of modern developments, the achievements of "early German culture," the conditions obtaining in the Germany of the Middle Ages,<sup>1</sup> and the new German "Hellenism."<sup>2</sup> The adaptable German school of historical research, proceeding on these lines, soon produced the most remarkable results, and it was discovered, for example, that Charlemagne was never a bringer, but only a destroyer of civilisation—quite naturally, since he was anything but a pure Nordic type. The pagan Saxon chief Widukind, however, was extolled as a representative of "genuine" civilisation, and upheld as the pattern of a German "hero." What made such otherwise amusing extravagances dangerous was the effect which all such systematic distortions of history inevitably exercised on German minds. Young Germans were bound to believe, eventually, not only in a mystical "mission" of the German people to achieve world domination,<sup>3</sup> but also in the "fact" that in the course of history they had been cheated, encircled, and robbed again and again of their "honestly conquered" acquisitions, and of the "Lebensraum" to which they were entitled. Hatred of the democratic peoples, and especially of Britain, was intentionally fostered, and a new wave of *furor teutonicus* was systematically provoked. The excited "Hitler Youth" sang with enthusiasm "Wir fahren gegen England" (We shall sail against England).<sup>4</sup>

The vilest example of this misuse of the sciences, however, was perpetrated in the case of biology, one branch of which was purposefully hypertrophied and artificially deformed into the new "racial science," in order to serve as a main prop of the Nazi world-philosophy. Costly "research institutions" have been erected with no other purpose than to "prove" by all possible means, including every conceivable misinterpretation and falsification, the existence and superiority of a specific "Nordic" élite within the Aryan race, with the Germans as the cream of this élite, and to show, on the other hand, the inferiority of all other, and especially of the non-Aryan races. Since 1933 more and more completely unqualified Nazis have been appointed as professors of the racial "science," and have trumpeted abroad the nonsense resulting from their "investiga-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 202, 205

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 108-109

<sup>3</sup>Cf p. 52, 56, 84.

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 53-55, 58, 203

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tions," while the German universities have acquiesced in such teaching. The abominable results of the practical application of the "race theory" fill a substantial proportion of this book, in accordance with their significance as regards the mentality of the present German generation. But we need not waste many words on the absurd theory itself, which is flatly refuted by qualified scientists throughout the world.

Though the doctrine of race was the very corner-stone of Nazism—Hitler himself explained that "the State is the vessel, the race its content," and again that "on the presence of the Nordic Aryan all human civilisation has depended"—a certain disunity prevailed among the German racialists as to what the spurious term "the Nordic-Aryan race" actually meant, while even Hitler has eventually admitted that a pure-blooded German race, which had been claimed by Weber and some former racial purists, does not exist.<sup>1</sup> In Germany proper the practical—though not the scientific—problem could be solved in a comparatively simple manner by declaring that every German who had no Jewish blood in his veins was a "Nordic Aryan," and by segregating the "Jews" in accordance with the religion of their ancestry. But difficulties arose when the "born leaders" of the nation had to be certified as possessing the indispensable qualification of racial purity. The whole principle of racial selection was soon severely shaken—indeed, it was practically thrust aside—by the very wise discovery that "physical features must not be decisive, but personal achievements." Thus, as it proved impracticable to declare that a man of conspicuously "German" appearance was *eo ipso* a "born leader," it was simply argued that the man who had the qualities of a leader must therefore be of German race, whatever might be his complexion.

The tendentious theory broke down completely when the incorporation of other peoples into the "Reich" had to be reconciled with the doctrine of "blood and soil,"<sup>2</sup> the dogma that a true national community requires racial unity on the territory of the State. Now the problem as to what precise admixture of "related races" could be admitted—a mere theoretical question as long as Germany remained within her former frontiers—began to assume dangerous proportions. Since it had been officially proclaimed by the highest racial authority, Rosenberg,<sup>3</sup>—thereby contradicting the propagandists of a "purely German" race—that all persons of "Nordic" blood were admissible for German citizenship, Mussert in Holland, Quisling in Norway, and the German governors in these "Nordic" countries

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 84.

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could explain to their fellow-countrymen that the "ties of blood" must bring the "related peoples" closer together; and we have seen already, in the case of Norway, what was regarded as the best method of achieving the desired result.<sup>1</sup> But on the annexation of Poland and Czechoslovakia it had seemed that on the strength of the racial doctrine Hitler's original idea must prevail, that the natives of the conquered non-Nordic countries would simply have to be domesticated like animals. Himmler, moreover, who, at that time, had been made responsible for these territories, had at first proclaimed that the East would have to be Germanised exclusively by German settlers. When it turned out that this was impossible, the same Himmler resorted to the theory that a million persons of "mixed blood"—i.e., those with an alleged admixture of German blood — could be "won back to the German race." Again this racial selection was not to be effected by a proof of ancestry — impracticable as that was in these parts — or in accordance with physical features, but by the new criterion of "conduct", and the membership of certain German organisations was now held to be a sufficient "racial test" for admission as a "Volksdeutscher." Some time later, when the bolstering up of the German armies with men from the conquered countries was becoming a more and more urgent necessity, even the requirement of German "conduct" was silently abandoned, and the Germans began to force Poles of military age to register on the "list of Volksdeutsche," menacing them with arrest and deportation to concentration camps in case of refusal. They thereby succeeded in "regaining for the German race" hundreds of thousands of men of Polish origin, in order to employ them as cannon fodder.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the wish to maintain good relations with Axis partners had led other German racialists to develop further the theory of "racial conduct," and to adopt the opinion that an entirely "new racial élite would arise from the brotherhood in arms." This theory was not confined to European races, and henceforth the Japanese were no longer regarded as inferior to the Nordics. The Soviet peoples, however, without much racial discrimination between them, were reduced wholesale to the status of sub-human beings — after a temporary promotion while the Russo-German neutrality pact was in force. The "scientific" position of the German scholars in this case was not particularly enviable, inasmuch as the Slavs belong to the Aryan, though not to the "Nordic," family of nations, as this term is under-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 93-94

<sup>2</sup> Cf White Book on the "Punishment of War Crimes," HM Stationery Office, 1943, pp 26, 37-38

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stood in the German "racial science." But the Nazi racialists showed themselves worthy of their reputation. With the help of their new doctrine of "conduct" they solved even the apparently impossible task of proving the racial worthiness of the anti-Communist White Russians, who joined the German Forces, and, of course, the former Tsarist officers,<sup>1</sup> who held commissions in the German forces, while the brothers and cousins of these men, who did not share their political opinions, were racially inferior and had their righteous place in the slave-camps of the Eastern workers (*Ostarbeiterlager*). Some other European Slavs, e.g., Slovaks and Bulgarians, found themselves in a similarly precarious racial position.

Nazi racialists had once stressed the fact that the Finns and Hungarians belong to the same, non-Aryan, race. In respect of the Finns this fact had furnished an excellent reason why Hitler should decline to intervene in their favour during the Russo-Finnish war of 1939-1940. But the racial reputation of Finland was at once firmly established when she re-entered the war against Russia on the side of Germany, although this magnanimity of the racialists turned out to have been a little hasty, it might have been safer, from the "scientific" point of view, to provide for the eventual possibility of deducing that the poor racial quality of the Finns constituted the ulterior reason why they could not endure to the end. The non-Aryan quality of the Hungarians was a still more ticklish matter. For Hungary, after the Communist intermezzo of Béla Kun, had become the native land of "modern European totalitarianism." In any case, as long as they backed Germany with all that they had, the racial equality of the Hungarians, Aryans or non-Aryans—except, of course, the Hungarian Jews—was beyond any question.

All this may suffice to give the reader some idea of the biological value of the racial theory, and the intellectual gyrations of its representatives. We need not repeat that the German racialists cannot claim the excuse that they were forced to keep in step with the ever-changing requirements of Nazi politics. For that they did so is the very thing that we wished to demonstrate; and it is, in fact, the worst reproach that can be brought against a scholar.<sup>2</sup>

But the wildest caprioles of German racial research were reserved for the Jews, concerning whom these scholars have discovered that they constitute a perfect Pandora's box of all evil characteristics, and that they inevitably transmit their vices to all their descendants, even in the case of "mixed marriages." The galaxy of famous Jewish names, and the great number of eminent men born of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 172-173.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 82-84, 91.

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marriages between Jewish and Aryan wives or husbands, were simply ignored. Among other things, the German racialists have discovered a special "decomposing mind" in the Jews — a term whose true scientific meaning denotes a certain tendency to nervousness and hysteria, which is found in individuals of all races. It was an ironical coincidence that precisely this defect was one of the characteristics of Hitler.<sup>1</sup> To what extravagances the racial nonsense has proceeded appears from the fact that German racialists have been capable, merely by measuring and fingering the skulls of two brothers, the sons of an "Aryan" mother married to a Jew, of declaring that one was an Aryan compatriot, and the other a Jew.

The deliberate resort to falsifications and wilful distortions in order to discredit the Jewish race may be detected, incidentally, in many other departments of knowledge; and this provides further evidence of our statement that the dictated and tendentious "world-philosophy" was bound to deprave even such branches of science as appeared to have but little relation to it. Thus, the history of literature claimed that the devilishness of the Jews was "proved" by the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," although this document was long ago exposed as a fabrication. Famous German writers, whose liberal sympathies were unmistakable, were represented by subservient historians of literature as the forerunners or promoters of anti-Semitism. Among such authors were Gustav Freytag, the leading German historical novelist, and an advocate of individualism, liberalism, and tolerance; and the most eminent Low-German dialect novelist, Reuter,<sup>2</sup> who, in fact, had to spend many years in prison on account of his democratic and liberal convictions. Another ironical illustration of the purposeful mendacity of the new German history of literature is the case of Theodor Fontane,<sup>3</sup> who was transformed into an anti-Semitic hero, although on his seventieth birthday he published a poem expressing his contempt of anti-Jewish intolerance. The treatment by the German scholars of the works of Jewish scientists and authors deserves particular mention in this context. So many well-known men of Jewish extraction had done valuable work in every branch of science during the last century that it was impossible to abstain from making use of their books and profiting by their discoveries. A remedy was quickly found, typically German in its hypocritical thoroughness.<sup>4</sup> German scholars were simply forbidden — not to use the works, but to mention the names of their Jewish authors. This game of hide-and-seek was carried so far that the discovery of "Salvarsan" by the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 206

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 12, 219

<sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 22

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 108

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famous German Jew, Professor Ehrlich, was suddenly ascribed to his Japanese assistant Hata, while Einstein's theory was derided, and Freud's doctrine of psycho-analysis was, for some time, hushed up altogether. When suppression was possible no longer it was finally announced that a German investigator, a man of whom no one had ever heard, had made "sensational discoveries relating to dreams and the subconscious," which proved to be a mere plagiarism of what was known throughout the world as Freud's doctrine of psycho-analysis

#### IV

There was soon no sphere of knowledge left in which the "world-philosophy" had not twisted and disfigured the results of free research and free teaching, since Nazi professors had replaced, by their refurbished mysticism and their "truly German quality of moral earnestness," the "decomposing irony of the liberalising and judaizing" international celebrities who had formerly "disgraced" the professorial chairs. Not only at the universities, but in all branches of learning, the curriculum has been planned to the last detail in accordance with the Nazi theories, culminating in the deification of the Leader, a spurious mood of heroism, and hatred of everything "strange in breed."

For more than twelve years the Nazi sophistries have been drummed into German youth, and the effect became quickly perceptible even on school children, in their increasing insolence and boastful intolerance; not surprisingly, for their primitive minds, when required to adopt the Nazi creed, were still less capable of criticism and inner resistance than those of the older university students. But the spiritual control began much earlier. It penetrated even the privacy of the bedroom; parents were recommended to "strengthen the minds of their children by nailing on the wall above their heads a sword or an old pistol." From the third year of life the training of "character" in the Nazi sense was administered through the medium of the compulsory Youth Organisations—the "Hitler Youth" and the affiliated "League of German Girls"—which comprised all boys and girls up to the age of eighteen, when the boys had to join the pre-military "Arbeitsdienst," or the S.A., and the girls the Women's Organisation of the Party. There was little time left for family life.

No space need be wasted in detailed descriptions of the methods used to mould the Hitler Youth into true Nazis. Suffice it to mention that the members were taken systematically through certain con-



centration camps—though, probably, not quite those of the Belsen type—in order to “inure” them to cruelty and suffering; and, after the attempt of July 20th, 1944, the film showing the barbarous execution, by hanging, of the conspirators was produced before many juveniles and also before all units of the home army where recruits were in training.<sup>1</sup> When, in 1944, Hitler defined the function of the newly-created office of “Inspector-general for the training of military leaders”<sup>2</sup> as “developing, in close co-operation with the Hitler Youth, the necessary qualifications for leadership by single-minded National-Socialist education and guidance,” the allusion to the spirit of the Hitler Youth<sup>3</sup> was particularly significant of the real meaning of that statement. For the Hitler Youth was then already under the absolute control of the Gestapo chief, Himmler. But the author well remembers than even long before the outbreak of war young students had bitterly complained to him that in the Hitler Youth, still more than in the schools, they were forced to play the hypocrite, and that the mutual distrust was almost intolerable. Character-training, as applied in the Nazi Youth, was indeed one of the foremost examples of the fact that in the Third Reich every moral conception had been “transvaluated” to bear a meaning exactly the contrary of ours.<sup>4</sup> Instead of rational and independent thought, restriction to the type, and evocation of the herd-instinct; instead of upright single-mindedness, subservience and hypocrisy, instead of restraint and modesty, boasting and arrogance, instead of justice, intolerance and the right of the strongest. No candidate could any longer be admitted to sit for an examination unless he could prove by the certificate of a Party organisation that he had shown the qualities of “character” prescribed by the Party doctrine—i.e., “unconditional submission to the Leader and the Totalitarian State.”

The imposition of the deadening “world-philosophy” was followed by a rapid decline of the spiritual aspirations of the German people as a whole. This development, which was accompanied by a striking decrease in the numbers of students of the arts and the moral sciences, was the more noteworthy as it was directly contrary to the growing desire for spiritual cultivation which, during the same period, could be observed in other parts of the world—in this country and, even more strikingly in the U.S.A. and in Russia.<sup>5</sup> Technology and mere technique became all-important in Hitler’s Reich—inevitably, since the preparations for autarky and a new war were ruthlessly taken in

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 137

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 138, 252-256

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp 87, 89

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 51, 57, 87, 94, 139, 170, 195

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp 317-319

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hand from the very first day of Nazi rule and thenceforth constituted the focus of all public and private activities.<sup>1</sup> Further, it was obvious that the training of the urgently needed young scientists must not be "unnecessarily" delayed by demanding for their matriculation to the faculties of natural sciences and the Polytechnics a "perfectly superfluous" general education in the older sense of the term. This lowering of the general spiritual level, this narrow-minded specialisation and mechanisation, was by no means confined, however, to the students of the natural sciences. Hitler had proclaimed as early as 1933 that henceforth the first requirement of an official of the State or Party, and also of every professional man, was not knowledge, but a complete permeation with the spirit of Nazism. Since "degenerate ethics" had been abolished, and genuine civilisation was officially ridiculed, and replaced by a merely external *Kultur*, it could no longer accord with the intentions of the Nazi Government to cultivate even that moderate *Allgemeinbildung* which, by means of a however pedantic and one-sided, study of the classics had been traditionally instilled in the "better classes." Indeed, it was by no means desirable to acquaint the students any longer with the doctrines of the democratic Greek philosophers, or otherwise to humanise and broaden their outlook, and thereby, perhaps, enable them to form opinions on historical relations and developments which might differ from the official truth. It was far better to cut down the study of the classics, thus helping to make up for the labour shortage<sup>2</sup> by docking the attendance at the higher schools by a whole year.<sup>3</sup> But although the pupils of the grammar-schools and the students of the universities had no longer to waste their time in obtaining a modicum of classical education, the new requirements of Party life, the hours of marching with the Swastika colours, and pre-military drill, made it more and more difficult for them to acquire even that minimum of professional knowledge required by every lawyer, teacher, doctor or engineer. The more reasonable students were disturbed by the fact that they had neither time nor energy left for serious study. In 1938 an examiner told the writer that, in spite of a drastic lowering of the standard of the examinations for the legal diploma, many candidates were no longer equal to the most modest requirements. The examinations were gradually reduced to a mere formality, as every candidate was now able to produce a certificate from some Nazi organisation to the effect that

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 159-160.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 175-177

<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that, at a time when other peoples were striving to raise the level of compulsory education, the German elementary schools quickly followed the example in reducing the period of attendance by a year

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he was prevented by his Party work from adequately devoting himself to his studies. In such a case he had to be passed, although he might be a perfect ignoramus.

Such was the state of education in Nazi Germany—before the granting of all the special war-time concessions. Truly, the nation was not to be envied on which these uncultivated and half-trained, but "politically reliable" practitioners and officials were let loose.

#### V

But what of the mentality of the professors, who ought to be the standard-bearers of ethics, and of the learned men whose conduct is commonly assumed to be symptomatic of the ethical level of a nation? It is only a hundred years ago that seven professors of the University of Göttingen preferred to lose their positions and their daily bread rather than submit to political pressure. Then Germany's scholars declared themselves at one with them. "*Tempora mutantur . . .*" It was already a very different spirit which spoke in the political manifesto of the German "intellectuals" published during the Great War. Still, it has been argued, national emotion admitted of some excuse for that amazing outburst, hypocritical though it was. But there is no excuse for the German scholars who remained in office when Hitler took over in 1933. To be a professor means to "profess" one's convictions, to serve the scientific, and not a dictated, truth. No one can fulfil this sacred office with a bandage over his eyes or a gag in his mouth. And no half-service is possible, he is a traitor to the highest principle of science who submits to any restrictions whatsoever. In the words of an old students' song from Germany's better past

"Who knowing the truth yet doesn't speak out,  
That man is indeed a contemptible lout!"

The university teacher in the Third Reich who had sworn absolute devotion to the Nazi State and its Leader, who had vowed to carry out his work "in the spirit of Nazism," was so thoroughly controlled that obviously he could not but fulfil his vow, even though he might not consider the enforced oath of loyalty as binding. A scholar cannot plead also that he had not clearly perceived the hypocrisy of which he would be guilty in directing his educational and research work in accordance with the Nazi requirements. He was guilty of gross and deliberate dishonesty when he concealed from his pupils what he knew to be the truth, teaching them falsehoods and educating them in principles which exclude all independent thought. What kind of conscience must that German professor of theology have had who constrained himself to teach the very antithesis of

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the Christian faith? Or that moral philosopher who "professed" the Nazi dogma of the "supreme racial value" of the Germans, instead of Christian ethics, humanism, and the categorical imperative? It must indeed be impossible for a university teacher who still possessed a remnant of self-respect to offer his pupils, instead of the bread of genuine knowledge, a "world-philosophy" expressed in empty and mystical verbiage, which they were compelled to learn by heart, because nonsense cannot be rationally understood. What a perfect turncoat and liar must be that historian, that political economist, who had to teach the official "truth" about modern developments, and to justify or hide the reckless opportunism of Nazi politics? To say nothing of the fabricators of the "racial theory" who degraded themselves by becoming the scientific hirelings of Nazism.

You will ask yourselves in vain how all those learned men, who were able to perceive the truth about Hitler and his gang, could continue to serve their Nazi masters. It was not cowardice alone that explained this contemptible attitude—still more contemptible if compared with the manful attitude of many scholars in the conquered countries. The true source of their behaviour was, in most cases, their Pan-Germanist herd-instinct, which overcame all better impulses. It enabled them to witness in silence the outrages against the schools and the intelligentsia of the enslaved nations; and even in some cases to lend a hand in the plundering of foreign galleries and libraries.<sup>1</sup> True, the German scholars knew that an attempt to kick against the pricks might quickly end in their relegation to a concentration camp. And yet—why was there never any sign of general revolt, regardless of consequences? Why did they not at least resign their posts and save their reputations? There were some, indeed, who did so. Apart from the professors who were expelled by the Nazis as "exponents of the spirit of Weimar," or for racial reasons, there were some who lost their liberty when they tried to maintain their independence, and some were killed because of their resistance. Some also nobly disregarded the danger to themselves and their families, in order to help a colleague. But these were rare exceptions. The bulk of the German scholars were of a rather different make. Too many of them, like the professional men who stole the practices of the Jewish doctors and lawyers, preferred to feather their own nests. From the very beginning they were not ashamed to derive personal profit from the expulsion from the pro-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 136, 206, 256, and see the unanimous indictment of "German professors and scholars who condoned and even took part in the Nazi prostitution of learning," passed by the conference of the International Association of University Professors and Lecturers at Oxford, in July, 1945

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fessorial chairs of "Freemasons, Liberals, Marxists and Jews," and from the resignation of the few who refused to degrade themselves by subservience to the Nazis. Even of those professors and academicians who were not personally interested in the removal of competitors the majority did not risk anything more than a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders; or, in rare instances, they may have written a lukewarm letter of recommendation which might procure a former colleague access to one of the lesser universities abroad. Fawning submissiveness reached such a depth that German universities even refused a copy of their diploma of the doctorate to those scholars who had been forced to flee from Germany, leaving behind them all their goods and chattels. Everybody dreaded the accusation that he was a "friend of an enemy of the State."

When the end came, in 1945, at all events, the gentlemen and scholars who were still in office were almost all of one political and moral colour; and it should be remembered, when the German High Schools are to be reconstructed, that hardly any goats were left to be divided from the Nazi sheep.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FINE ARTS UNDER NAZI RULE

WE learnt from Hitler, when he came to power, that the "New German *Kultur*"<sup>2</sup> would now be realised. This favourite ideal, inspired by Richard Wagner, was *a priori* bound to be a failure, since it was not confined to the aim of developing Germany's own culture and genius, but included the claim that it was her mission to impose the "German *Kultur*" upon the world, and this not only in the sphere of the fine arts. Even in respect of Germany itself Wagner's idea was not a happy one. It involved the danger of running into a cul-de-sac, as it meant rejecting all cultural currents of foreign origin and character and thus implied a deliberate seclusion from the living stream of the world of art. Wagner, of course, had never contemplated a "purge" in the Nazi sense. But in the opinion of many even his own great art had begun already to show signs of becoming one-sided, and could not have been developed much further. However that may be, what the Nazis made of Wagner's doctrine was just what they made of Nietzsche's philosophy the fanciful ideas of a great mind were carried to such extremes that they became nonsensical.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 319-321.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 52, 58.

#### THE GERMAN MENTALITY

We may perceive a second analogy also. For Nietzsche and Wagner alike their theories were self-contained. Neither the "New German *Kultur*" nor the doctrine of a "natural right of the stronger" had anything to do, originally, with any political ends, although Wagner was a national fanatic—far more so than Nietzsche, whom he accused, during the war of 1870, of not being "German enough." The Nazis, however, began at once to use the names of both these famous men and their doctrines as water to turn their political mill.

"The will to power, heroism, and activism have to dominate German art in the future, and serve the new German people of labourers and soldiers. Even in the arts Nietzsche's theory must prevail, that the right of the strongest alone can be acknowledged, and the leader is the embodiment of that ideal. The warrior of totalitarian German art can only be victorious, or perish. Therefore, the German artist can submit only to the criterion of his highest art-lord, Adolf Hitler, and of the art directors appointed by him. He cannot have anything in common with the democrats, with their longing for happiness, peace, self-administration, and other individual creations. The judgment of anyone holding different opinions, above all that of the international democratic critics, cannot touch him."

This and similar statements, emphasizing the notion that "the days of the individual artist are past in Germany," will serve to elucidate the rather obscure definition in the N.S.D.A.P. programme, that "art must appertain to the community in its origin, in the choice of its subjects, in its expression and aim." But even Goebbels' gloss was not so easily understood. Translated into plain English the meaning was simply this: Art had to be a means of political propaganda. Its real purpose was to promote Nazism, just as the "world-philosophy" and the "auxiliary" sciences had to promote it. In accordance with the essence of the "world-philosophy" it was to be the task of the artist to produce works which proclaimed the superiority of the German race, and the German mission to conquer and dominate the world under the command of a godlike Leader.

This definition excluded *a priori* from the "heroic" German art all motives originating in the Christian religion and the Christian virtues of charity and renunciation — to say nothing of the Old Testament — or in the ideals of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and the Rights of Man. Even within the permitted boundaries no artist was free to express his individual thoughts and sentiments in his works. What creative work was to be admitted for publication or exhibition was to be decided by the "Leader" and

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 55, 83-84

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the various "Boards of Art" (the "Reichskulturkammer" and the "Kunstkammern") appointed by him. The necessary supervision was to be exercised by Goebbels as "Reichskunstminister" in such time as he could spare from his work as Minister for Propaganda. In pursuance of their task Hitler's art directors decreed, exactly as had been done in the field of science, not only the general tendency, but also the individual themes which were to be treated or were not to be treated, and the manner in which the basic idea behind the propaganda was to be expressed in the works of art. The artist himself might not even decide to what particular taste or what particular class of the public he wished to appeal, or in what special manner he would make his appeal. As an "art-warrior" he had to attune his products to the needs of the warrior masses, in accordance with the opinions which Hitler's artistic drill-sergeants held concerning the artistic tastes and needs of their militarised subjects.

"But these were mere arrogant empty phrases! Unintelligible nonsense! If it is a crime to suppress opinion and to dictate a 'world-philosophy,' it is equally shameful to forbid an artist to express himself, to force motives upon him, and to decree how he is to use his talents." If these are our objections they reveal a deplorable ignorance of Nazism. True, outside Germany it always was an axiom that all genuine art presupposes the individual liberty of the artist to express his own ideas and sentiments in his works—indeed, that just this is the real meaning of art. In the non-totalitarian world the dogma always prevailed unchallenged that in the realm of the arts all human beings, without regard to their origin, can meet in free competition, in which ability alone is decisive, and the general opinion is the arbiter. Nazi Germany thought differently, and the leaders knew what they were doing when they declared that only a German mind would be capable of fully understanding their artistic aims or their new philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Only a spiritual alien, whose mentality was not attuned to the totalitarian pitch, would ask whence a mere professional political propagandist like Goebbels derived his qualifications for reducing to type the artistic production of a whole people, and deciding that for the Germans the inferior level of "Strength through Joy" was the appropriate one. Only non-totalitarian artists and dilettanti would refuse to be content with the simple explanation that the supreme war-lord of a people was *eo ipso* also the legitimate arbiter of national art, and that he could appoint art-generals and art-sergeant-majors as well as army officers. Only a totally undisciplined non-German mind would claim that not even the greatest artist — let alone Goebbels — was entitled to regulate the artistic

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 47, 48, 58, 85

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creations of others—and that any genuine artist or lover of art would refuse with indignation to exercise such a function.

It was a particularly revolting feature of the German mentality that it obeyed orders even in the matter of art. For not only is every real artist a born individualist, but the temperament of the lover of art also is commonly more vivacious, and sometimes also more obstinate, than that of the average human being. Moreover, opposition would have been so much easier in the sphere of the arts than elsewhere, that the "good conduct" of German artists, and of the German art-loving public, must be taken as a proof that—with a few praiseworthy exceptions—the truly German minds swallowed without revulsion all the consequences of the "leader principle" and the racial theory, even in the arts. There were no signs of serious opposition against the removal from their galleries of the most valuable works of art because the "cultural authorities" alleged that they were of "alien conception." They did not kick against the regulations that prohibited the exhibition of a work of art which did not conform to the Goebbels standard, and which forbade artists to work at all until they had proved their legitimisation by producing the necessary "Aryan" ancestors, and had satisfied a Party test certifying their political reliability. It may illustrate the impudent madness of the Nazi art commanders that at their orders the libretto of Handel's oratorio "Israel in Egypt" had to be rewritten and Aryanized, with the new title "Der Opfersieg von Walstatt,"<sup>1</sup> while Heine's famous "Lorelei" song was simply ascribed to an unknown "Aryan" poet.

Many German artists who were forced after 1933 to leave their homeland are now happily working at liberty in a democratic country. But the sad fact remains that there were many others in Germany who willingly submitted to an unnatural and inartistic yoke for mercenary reasons, and were ready to take the places vacated by exiles. Who can say how many genuine works of art might not have been born, instead of Nazi platitudes, if their potential creators had not been prevented from using their minds and hands, or even from leaving the country?

Now, what was the real basis of the "New German Art," apart from the racial purity and political reliability of the artists, and the requisite propaganda value of their products? Hitler has declared, *ex cathedra*, in some of his terrific speeches on the arts,<sup>2</sup> that "it is felt in the depth of the German soul that in the Nordic Aryan the Hellenism of antiquity is revived. Of course, not that of the

<sup>1</sup> Walstatt, in Silesia, was the place where Blucher, in 1813, won his "Opfersieg" (a victory demanding exceptional sacrifice) over Napoleon. Cf. also pp. 59, 99, 100

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 205



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degenerate, intellectual period of Socrates and Plato, but the true Hellenism of an earlier heroic epoch." This, again, was not easily understood. For what we are accustomed to call Hellenism is precisely that state of mind which prevailed in the small Greek democracies in the days of the great philosophers who were so abhorred by the Nazis; and it is expressed in the immortal works of art which were created in that period and which breathe the same spirit—that is, the very antithesis of Nazism. When Hitler spoke of an earlier epoch, he could only be referring to the Greek heroic sagas and to Homer's epic, which may have reminded him of the *Nibelungenlied*<sup>1</sup> and the German Valhalla. This, very probably, was the root of the matter, as it accorded well with the Nazi tendency to revive a primitive "heroism" of a peculiar German style.<sup>2</sup> Just as the "world-philosophy" endeavoured to eliminate Christian ethics, and to establish a "morality" based on brute force, so it was the new German artistic ideal to abolish the spiritual refinements of 2,500 years, and to standardise—of course, with "all the modern technical improvements"—the arts, including poetry, at the level of Homer's heroes and the Saxon warriors who listened at their drinking bouts to the songs of the bards. It is typical of Hitler's familiar trick of "transvaluation" of generally accepted conceptions<sup>3</sup> that he should call this "Hellenism." At any rate, it reveals what sort of art was believed by the supreme "Art-Lord" and his artistic lieutenants to be representative of the New German *Kultur*.

And the practical result after many years of "cleaning and rebuilding the arts" by the Nazis? Since force and the arts are antithetical, the matter was bound to end, as indeed it did, in a complete torpor. Where is the work of art created not against but in accordance with the Nazi precepts, which could stand the test of time? We have not seen any Nazi work of art which could face objective criticism, and it was prudent, indeed, of the "Reichskunstminister" to make it clear from the outset that the opinions of non-German critics could not concern a German artist. It is significant that in music, for instance, only pre-Nazi compositions have ever been released for performance abroad. But in other spheres of art also foreign critics have been referred only to works of art created in the past, i.e., in liberty, without the tutelage of "Boards of *Kultur*," and by artists whose Aryan grandmothers were not always certified beyond question.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 8

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 84-86, 145-146

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 57-58.

## CHAPTER VII

### NAZI LAW AND JUSTICE

Nothing is more significant of a people's mentality than the quality of its law and its jurisprudence, and in no other sphere does Germany's relapse into barbarism, under the Nazi régime, become more glaringly evident. When one considers the monstrous things that have been happening since 1933 one might ask whether it is not superfluous to go into any details—whether it would not be enough to note that German law and justice went down in a mire of blood. However, in a book on the German mentality we are bound to give more special attention to the systematic destruction of the Law, and, above all, to the intentional and successful undermining of the popular notion of right and wrong. Moreover, the methodical veiling, with a cloak of legality, of all their onslaughts against liberty and justice—since their semi-legal “seizure of power”—constitutes by itself a highly remarkable characteristic of the Nazi mentality.

We must observe the gradual worsening of the methods employed, at first subtle and refined, then more and more uncere-  
monious, until at last we come to the proclamation that whenever the interest of the State, i.e., the Nazi Government,<sup>1</sup> was involved—and when is that not the case in a totalitarian dictatorship?—even that relic which the Nazis called their “Law” had to be put aside. The man in the street in this country, who kept so jealous a watch to see that the unavoidable restrictions of civil liberties in time of war did not exceed the necessary minimum, can hardly obtain a better idea of what the loss of the war would have meant to himself, than by contrasting the conditions of “law and justice” in Nazi Germany with those obtaining here.

The standard of the law in Germany had, in the course of time, reached a comparatively high level before the Nazis came into power. This was one of the few fields in which a modern spirit had already prevailed in Imperial Germany, in spite of certain flaws—as, for example, the fatal contrast between the harsh penalties inflicted for petty slander concerning the princes, and the totally inadequate fines which used to be imposed for the vilest attacks against the good fame of the representatives of the people or a private person.<sup>2</sup> *Habeas*

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 48-50.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 145

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*Corpus* had long been in force. No administrative detention was admissible in peace-time. The criminal law was based on the principle that no penalty could be inflicted save under a statute, nor retrospectively, nor for offences committed abroad unless they were likewise punishable in the foreign country. There were modern statutes relating to first offenders, to the re-education of prisoners, and the conditional reprieve of convicts. Equality before the courts and the rights of the defendant were properly secured by the rules of procedure. There were modern civil and commercial codes. Considerable improvements in the law particularly in its social aspects, had been brought into force under the Republic of Weimar. The relations between landlord and tenant had been brought into line with modern social ideas, and adequate statutes—which, *inter alia*, gave the representatives of workers and employees a voice and seat on the boards of directors of all larger companies—regulated the conditions of labour, secured impartial mediation in strikes and lock-outs, and provided special courts, composed of employers and employees, to decide proceedings originating out of employment. There was a well-informed, incorruptible Bench — irremovable by the administration — in which the public had confidence, and the number of rascals among the barrister-solicitors<sup>1</sup> was not exceedingly high.

Signs of decay had appeared since the middle of the twenties, when political rancour slowly began to disturb the impartial administration of justice. But the rot, however significant and alarming, was still confined to a series of unjust judgments in eminently political cases. It was not until the Nazis came into power that the integrity of the German jurisprudence definitely broke down. Indeed, it seems almost incredible that a few years were enough to change an apparently indestructible fabric of juridical integrity into a heap of wreckage—though it must be admitted that in the administration of justice at least a certain amount of resistance occurred, at the outset, which excited the Nazi gangsters to wilder and wilder measures.

When the Nazis had begun to complain of the “wretched state of the law in Germany,” no one had taken them seriously. It seemed too absurd to all who had the slightest notion of the evolution of German law that the new codifications, which had been enacted after years of discussion in the professional periodicals and organisations, and after careful consideration by the committees of the legis-

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<sup>1</sup>In Germany the careers of magistrates and judges are separated from those of the barrister-solicitors, though the examinations are the same. The functions of barrister and solicitor are combined.

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lature, and which had embodied or adapted so many ancient German traditions, should now be suddenly denounced as "Roman Law, alien to the German nature," or as "devilish Jewish inventions." The laughter, however, gave place to astonishment and dismay when, immediately after the seizure of power, it was seen that the matter was becoming serious. Under the cloak of the enforced and unconstitutional "Ermächtigungsgesetz" (the statute "legalizing" Hitler's dictatorship)<sup>1</sup> all the judges and magistrates, and all the barrister-solicitors who were suspect to the Nazis as Democrats, Freemasons, Socialists, Jews, or related to Jews, or simply as inconveniently upright men, were at once removed from the courts by the Nazi Minister of Justice.<sup>2</sup> Many of them were beaten up and thrown into the new concentration camps. Not a few of the more decent judges and magistrates remaining, and also some barrister-solicitors, retired from their profession. The great majority, however, submitted, some, perhaps, in the foolish belief that they could prevent the worst injustices by holding out, but most of them simply in order to earn the wherewithal to keep body and soul together. Party members were promoted to be presidents of the courts, and the gaps left were quickly filled by cutting down the finishing education<sup>3</sup> and effecting a wholesale "rejuvenescence" of the legal profession. There were more than enough politically "reliable" aspirants, what did it matter if they lacked all qualifications for a judicial office?

Those of the older lawyers who tried to acquiesce in the new conditions soon had to realise that this was possible only for a man who was prepared to sell his soul and conscience. They had, of course, at once to join the party and take the oath of allegiance to the Leader, involving the duty of unconditional obedience and, above all, to undergo a "course of instruction" in the new duties of a magistrate under Nazi rule.

"Political justice"! Here is the lever with which not only the whole system of the law, but all sense of morality, was gradually overthrown by the Nazis. It has always been one of the vexed questions of legal theory how far it is possible to eliminate the influence of political currents in the legal sphere. Modern American theorists have pointed out that at all times and in all countries such an influence has been traceable in the legislation, sometimes nationalistic, sometimes capitalistic, socialistic, or communistic. But as to jurisprudence, it was an axiom, in pre-Nazi Germany no less than in other parts of the civilised world, that a judge must give his decision

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 65.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 120-121.

<sup>3</sup>Cf p 102.

## NAZI LAW AND JUSTICE

unaffected by any influence of a political nature. Any so-called *Klassinjustiz*, if it existed at all in the former Germany, had been nothing more than a highly deplorable but unintentional defect, and a "political sentence" was generally regarded as reprehensible.

But not so with the Nazis! When in 1933 it was rumoured in Germany that the magistrates had been instructed (though at first secretly) that the old doctrines—to the effect that all individuals are equal before the law, that judgment must be given without respect of persons, or favour, or prejudice—were now obsolete and once for all abolished; that henceforth it must be the first task of a Nazi judge, in all criminal and civil proceedings, to investigate the "political reliability" of plaintiffs and defendants—nobody would believe the report. But, before long, it was common knowledge that the magistrates were taught they would "contravene the interest of the State" if (for example) they should uphold a contract in favour of a Freemason, or other "enemy of the State," against a Nazi litigant. The judges were reminded that there was always a "legal" possibility of setting aside such a contract because of "changed circumstances," and that it was only necessary to accept the thesis that, where an agreement had proved to be to the disadvantage of a Nazi contractor, "the general change of all aspects by the national revolution had decisively upset its basis." In this case it did not matter, of course, that the well-known principle of equity thus distorted—the old *clausula* "*rebus sic stantibus*"—was undoubtedly of "Roman" origin, and before long the courts, by way of exercising their "discretion," had developed a remarkable virtuosity in deciding every lawsuit in favour of the Nazi plaintiff or defendant. In the same way the principle of the "abuse of rights"—developed as a last resort in cases of extreme hardship—was continually misused by the Nazi courts. The plea also that a contract was "obtained by blackmail," or misrepresentation, was constantly misapplied in favour of Nazis, though often enough it was perfectly clear who was the real impostor or blackmailer.<sup>1</sup> Unjust discrimination was similarly practised in respect of witnesses, in civil and criminal proceedings. Only rare cases are imaginable, indeed, in which a Nazi-trained judge, who had sworn to act in the "spirit" of the prescribed "world-philosophy" would have found it possible to give a judgment which was not somehow tainted by political prejudice. Under the watchful eyes of Nazi officials, Party representatives, and Goebbels' journalists, he had no choice in the matter of accepting evidence, or of deciding which witnesses could not be allowed to take the oath, as being "not worthy of belief." If, in one of the rare cases when a Party member was not

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 161-163, 166-170

*eo ipso* exempted from the criminal jurisdiction of the common courts,<sup>1</sup> it should prove simply impossible to acquit him, it would be clear that extenuating circumstances must be admitted, because—if only by swinging a broken chair-leg in a beer-cellar fight—he had once “deserved well of his country, although he had now, unfortunately, taken a false step.” On the other hand, “the extreme penalty of the law must be imposed,” even in the case of a first offence, if “the culpable views of the defendant, dangerous to the State, were undeserving of any clemency.”

Day after day the courts were disgraced by such perversions of “justice,” more especially when matters really political were involved — when, for instance, the slander of a Party official, or even of a Minister, had to be atoned for, and a signal opportunity occurred of proving the “unshakable fidelity of the court to the Nazi State” by passing a sentence that would wreck a human life. Nor must we forget the injustice perpetrated in the various disciplinary courts against the upright opponents of the Nazis among the magistrates, officials of every kind, and professional lawyers. The “Report of Decisions of the German Court of Honour for Barrister-Solicitors,” for instance, is a real mine of information, which jurists in other countries should not fail to study, in order to obtain some notion of the moral and intellectual derangement of the Nazi lawyers. Indeed, German jurisprudence, since 1933, constitutes a monument of infamy, which will continue to appal the world long after Hitler and his “Third Reich” have passed away. The Nazi jurists themselves glorified their monstrous success by removing from their new emblem of the goddess Justitia the traditional bandage before her eyes which hitherto had symbolised her impartiality and non-respect of persons, and they explained this “ingenious” action by saying that “they had enabled Justice to look *with open eyes* upon the world.”

Statute after statute was enacted abolishing, step by step, those “obsolete” doctrines which form the basis of justice in civilised countries. In criminal law the dogma *nulla poena sine lege* (no punishment without a law) was abandoned. Instead of this the principle of “legal analogy” was adopted, empowering the courts to inflict punishment though the act in question did not conflict with the penal code. Henceforth it was sufficient that a defendant, in the eyes of a Nazi court, should “deserve” punishment in respect of “the fundamental idea” of a penal law dealing with similar contingencies. This meant the re-introduction of elastic definitions which the science of criminal law had long since abandoned on account of their dangerousness. It was a return to the odious practice of

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 119-120

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punishing, not proven offences against a clearly defined law, but entirely dubious "evil intentions"; and this reversion was particularly pernicious in the new Germany, when subservient magistrates were prepared to judge the "intentions" of a defendant according to his political opinions or race.

The "progressive" legislators did not even hesitate to endow their elastic laws with retrospective force, in order to revenge themselves upon old adversaries, by having them sentenced for past political activities, which were declared to have been "detrimental to the State." Even the death penalty was admissible in such cases, though all who have even the most superficial acquaintance with the problems of penal law are aware of the monstrous travesty of justice which inflicts punishment in respect of an act which was not punishable at the time when it was committed. At the same time the doctrine was abolished that an offence committed in a foreign country can be punished only if it is also punishable under the laws of the foreign country.

The new principles proved especially efficacious when, in violation of the law of nations, the farce of German "law" was introduced in the conquered countries. It was officially explained in Poland, for example, that "as the Nazi system is based on the principle that the weak has to serve the strong, the German criminal law must be applied by courts of German judges resolved to carry out the political will of the Third Reich." People were convicted for perfectly unobjectionable actions which had in no way infringed the laws of their own country in force at the time of committal, which actions, however, were found, retrospectively, to have been prejudicial to the German cause—or displeasing to the chiefs of the Fifth Columns. In the earlier stages of the war this system served also as a means of intimidating the subjects of neutral countries menaced by occupation, in order to persuade them to refrain from actions obnoxious to the Nazi policy. The case of the Czech barrister, Dr. Secanina, is a striking example of this German practice. He was imprisoned immediately after the occupation of Prague, sentenced to death by a German "Special Court," and beheaded, because he had been one of the foreign advocates who defended M. Dimitroff in the proceedings arising out of the Reichstag fire. Such crimes were perpetrated by German courts of justice as acts of "law," although it was attempted subsequently to camouflage them as mere "war security measures."

We cannot here consider in detail such "reforms" as the abolition of the distinctions between attempted and committed offences, between instigating, abetting, and aiding crimes, and of numerous

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other, very necessary, carefully devised and elaborated subtleties of criminal law, which all were given up "in order to enable the courts to proceed without ceremony against noxious people and enemies of the State." What did it matter to the Nazi legislators, in their unscrupulous opportunism, that, by removing all such "liberalistic and degenerate" safeguards, they utterly destroyed not only the possibility of exact legal definition, but all certainty in the interpretation and application of the law? The trend of this development is well illustrated by a report on the administration of penal law, published in 1945 by Hitler's last Minister of Justice, Thierack. The following quotation is particularly significant, because it shows the application, in the field of "justice," of the same fatal principle, derived from the "world-philosophy," which we had to castigate in the sphere of medical ethics—the doctrine that the killing of human beings who, admittedly, have not deserved the death penalty is an adequate and perfectly "legal" means of maintaining a "sound" people. Stating with pride that, in 1943, the number of death sentences passed by the courts (5,336) was already thirteen times as high as in pre-war times, the report continued "At a time when the most valuable blood is being sacrificed on the battlefield the depraved and socially and biologically inferior criminal cannot expect the community to put up with him any longer, even though the offence in question does not appear to demand the extreme penalty. His removal is a command in the interest of the preservation of the substance of the people. The administration of penal law thus fulfils the task of national hygiene in continuously cleansing the national body so as to prevent the bad elements getting the better of the good."

The first thing to be done, in order to assure the application of the Nazi doctrine in the sphere of law, was, of course, the suitable staffing of the courts. The purging of the "unreliable" elements among the lawyers was, apparently, not in itself a sufficient guarantee. "Special Criminal Courts" had to be set up everywhere for cases of a political nature, with judges especially chosen from "approved" Party members<sup>1</sup>. The ill-famed "Volksgericht," popularly called the "blood-court," in respect of its innumerable death sentences, which had to deal — in camera, of course — with cases of exceptional political importance, was only one of a great number of such courts. It was to the People's Court that the task of condemning to death, by hanging, of some of the more prominent

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<sup>1</sup> When the war approached the German frontiers, new military courts of summary justice were established in the defence areas—with "a political leader, or section leader of the NSDAP assisting (!) the presiding judge"—to try those civilians for "cowardice or selfishness," who attempted to "evade their duties towards the community." The sentence was either death or acquittal.



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partakers in the officers' plot which led to the attempt on Hitler's life in July, 1944, could be confidently entrusted.<sup>1</sup>

The methodical brutalisation of the infliction of punishment ought not to remain unnoticed in this context, as it was one of the characteristic means of inaugurating the Nazi spirit in the sphere of criminal law. We do not mean here the bloody atrocities of the Gestapo,<sup>2</sup> but the ordinary legal treatment of German convicts. As mentioned before, Imperial Germany had introduced modern principles in respect of the reformation of convicts. The Republican Government had adopted a progressive and humane system of combined punishment and re-education. The Nazis reverted immediately to the obsolete doctrine of "general deterrence," abolished the reforms in the prisons, and all the modern institutions for the rehabilitation of convicts. It was a sheer concession to the instinct of cruelty, one of those measures which served to "inure" the German mind to coming events,<sup>3</sup> when it was decreed that the death penalty was no longer to be inflicted by means of the guillotine, but by hacking off the delinquent's head with an axe, and, in certain cases, by hanging in public.

In the sphere of civil law, too, the purges of Bench and Bar, and the re-education of the judges, had obviously not yet fulfilled the expectations of the Nazis. Thus further statutes were devised to satisfy their whetted appetite, the most remarkable being one which provided that decided cases might be reopened, and recorded decisions quashed retrospectively, if "a judgment delivered against a National Socialist of merit did not answer to the new conceptions." One can readily imagine what was the upshot, when the economic vagabonds who went smash before 1933 and then found shelter with the Nazis, and who, quite apart from the new statute, had already done pretty well, since Hitler's seizure of power as extortioners, victimising their former employers or customers, were now entitled to demand "damages" from all those who had formerly obtained legal decisions against them. This new statute was especially illuminating, as it clearly revealed what was in the minds of the Nazi legislators and those who inspired them to tap this new source of profit.

All this, however, was only a beginning. After a period of "con-

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<sup>1</sup>It is noteworthy that even in this case some outward show of the traditional privilege of the army officers—to be tried only by their equals—was upheld. For a "military court of honour" had first to expel the "traitors" from the army, thus making them "civilians" and subject to the "Volksgericht," while at the same time the army was dissociated by this gesture from the conspirators (cf pp 15, 141, 144, 148, 243.)

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 133-136.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 81, 101, 138-141

solidation and observation," the Nazis decided at the Party meeting in Nuremberg, in 1935—the same meeting at which the new "racial laws" were announced<sup>1</sup>—to put an end, once and for all, to what they called the lukewarm attitude of many of the courts. What had been until then a principle whispered in secret to the lawyers was now officially proclaimed as a new dogma.

"LAW IS THAT WHICH IS USEFUL TO THE STATE:

The Leader and the N.S.D.A.P. alone have henceforth to decide what the courts are bound to consider as being in the interest of the State."

Now the cat was out of the bag. For a lawyer, at least, there could no longer be any doubt that this meant the official abolition in Germany of what had been, since the days of Solon, one of the most precious cultural possessions of mankind—the common law itself—and the destruction of all that is embodied in the word "Justice." The proclamation made it clear that henceforth every decree of the *Fuhrer* and the leading Party officials had to be applied as law. And further, all the general ideas which the *Fuhrer* or his chieftains might express in their speeches or proclamations must be regarded by the courts as having statutory validity. And again. All laws enacted before the seizure of power—in other words, the greater part of the former laws—had to be applied, henceforth, only in so far as they were in conformity with the tendencies expressed in the Party programme, in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and in the decrees or other utterances of the *Fuhrer* and the N.S.D.A.P.

One result of this "reform" was that no honest lawyer could any longer advise his client as to how the law really stood; and this uncertainty was grotesquely aggravated by the endless, opportunistic changes of policy under Nazi rule.<sup>2</sup> Even the most intelligent Nazi lawyer could hardly anticipate what *sic volo, sic jubeo* would really mean at the decisive moment, quite apart from the fact that the whole aspect of a case depended on the intricate question as to whether a client who at the beginning of a law-suit was considered a "reliable Volksgenosse" might not be regarded as a dangerous "enemy of the State" at the time when the judge gave his decision.

When I wrote down these statements for the first edition of this book I did not imagine that they were revealing anything new. There had been ample opportunity of realising that the new decree merely stressed with greater outspokenness the "duty" which, as a matter of fact, the majority of the German judges had been fulfilling for years

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 124

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 171-173, 183-185, 213, 230-232, 238.

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past, by way of "construing" the common law in accordance with the Nazi principles. But, curiously enough, this notion did not appear to have penetrated beyond the frontiers of Germany, though a glance at the German professional periodicals and law reports would have made it perfectly clear what was going on. Parties of German barrister-solicitors, headed by the scoundrels who were personally responsible for the destruction of the German law, had still been received as equals and honoured guests by professional associations abroad, even in this country. Only the general complacency prevailing everywhere before the recent war can explain how the real state of the German law after 1933, and the proclamation "*sic volo, sic jubeo*," could have been so completely overlooked abroad that even in the legal circles of other countries it caused a certain sensation when Hitler, in the autumn of 1942, once more expressly empowered a newly-appointed Minister of "Justice" to "set aside the law whenever the interest of the State demanded it." As both law and justice had long been dead as mutton, even Hitler could not kill them a second time. Probably the new pronunciamiento was intended as a prelude to a fresh purge of the Bench of members not yet sufficiently connivant. At all events a German magistrate who could endure to remain in office until 1942 was not deserving of our sympathy. Too many evil things, repulsive not only to a lawyer but to any upright man, had by then been done by every German court of law; the burden of disgrace that had been brought upon the courts and judges—to a great extent by their own fault—had been too grievous to permit an honest man with a trace of self-respect to carry on for ten deplorable years.

So far we have spoken only of the positive activities of the courts. No doubt they were bad enough; but the things which the courts tolerated in silence were terrible: political mass imprisonment, torturing by the Gestapo, and administrative murder without the excuse of crime. Since the abolition of *Habeas Corpus* had given the Gestapo unrestricted power over the life and liberty of all, the position of the judges had become almost as humiliating as the situation of the victims themselves. After 1933 no German court could any longer order the release of a Gestapo prisoner, or save him from being murdered, or bring the murderers to trial.<sup>1</sup> For the "political activities of Party members" were to be tried only by "Party courts" — a statutory exemption from the ordinary jurisdiction which, in practice, was extended to almost all offences

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 41, 76

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against the common law. Even when a court had acquitted a defendant, and discharged him from custody—and in a “political” case this meant that the defendant’s absolute innocence had been established, as there was, of course, no question of a “benefit of the doubt”—it was by no means certain that he would not be arrested afresh by the Gestapo at the very doors of the court, and taken to one of those places from which there was no return. The case of Pastor Niemöller,<sup>1</sup> who was arrested in this way when the court had been so “short-sighted” as to fail to impose a sentence of penal servitude, is only one example among many which serve to demonstrate both the personal insecurity of the individual and the contemptible position of the learned judges who accepted without protest such an affront and quietly remained in office—lucky that they were permitted to do so. By asking himself what would have been the reaction of the judges — and of the public — if such a thing had happened in Britain, the reader may best obtain some notion of the moral worth and the state of mind of those who have continued to administer the Nazi “law.” But could anyone be astonished who was acquainted with the underlying “world-philosophy,” and the dogma that the Leader was entitled to dispose at his discretion of the bodies and souls of all his subjects, as of so many inanimate machines?

Not much needs to be said about the obscurantist legislators and “Ministers of Justice” who, from 1933 onwards, methodically pulled up the law of Germany by the roots. No one had ever heard of them before, except perhaps at beer-cellar meetings. A former secretary of the court (*Gerichtsschreiber*)—Kerrl by name—became the first Nazi Minister of Justice in Prussia; a man who had never studied the law and knew only its outward forms. He had introduced himself by a pamphlet on “National-Socialistic Reforms in Criminal Law,” which made strikingly obvious his primitive conception of law in its totality, and of the science of Criminal Law in particular, and his want of understanding of the general and special problems in question. The same pamphlet contained the first announcement of the “Racial Statutes” which so greatly contributed to make Germany an outcast from the society of civilised nations.<sup>2</sup> This was the man to whom was entrusted, in the greatest of the German States, the unrestricted power to appoint and remove judges, public prosecutors, and barrister-solicitors, and to exert his arbitrary influence on the interpretation and application of the law itself. All the more important posts in his Ministry were staffed with persons

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 209

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 124

of similar qualifications, and much the same thing happened in the smaller German States. Whether or not these gentlemen had passed the professional examinations, not one of them had achieved any juridical distinction; but all had shown by their activities as political agitators, and some—as e g , the notorious Hans Frank, Minister of Justice, and the no less infamous Roland Freisler, Chairman of the “Blood Court”—by their previous careers as furious propagators of anti-Semitism, and their dubious reputation as advocates, their utter unfitness for high office in the administration of justice. Such was the ‘commanding intellectual stature’ of the men who created the new “Academy for German Law”—Hans Frank was its first president—as a sounding-board for their arrogant, mystical, and indescribably stupid speeches, in which they professed that they were making the new German law an “ideal” for the whole world. What was really in their minds may be seen from a speech delivered in 1938 by another Nazi Minister of Justice. “Formerly the opinion prevailed,” he declared, “that right took precedence of might. To-day we all are aware that might must take precedence, in order to pave the way for the German law (!)”

Apart from our natural indignation aroused by the legal theory of the Nazis, the sentences and the sins of omission committed by the German law courts, we have to take into consideration the broader aspects and the repercussions of the mental attitude of the magistrates and lawyers. We have seen how, after some initial reluctance, this important section of the German intelligentsia—which, by its very profession, was more than any other bound to defer to honesty and commonsense—succumbed just in the same way to the Nazi craze as did the other intellectuals, how both the morals and the intellect of the men who administered the German law became more and more rotten. But when we state that Nazism, through the medium of its “world-philosophy,” destroyed the very foundations of law and justice, just as it poisoned all the other branches of human knowledge, the reference is not only to the law itself, the judicature, and the lawyers, but also, and even mainly, to the people, i e , to the destruction of the popular notion of right and wrong among those to whom this sort of “law” was administered.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” For the purpose of rounding off the reader’s impression we cannot do better than give him, in the appendix to this chapter, a rather more detailed description of the “legal” methods adopted for stripping the German Jews of all their property and destroying their souls, before the Gestapo took over their bodies for deportation to the East. While the judicature had a share in the “administrative” measures “only” in

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so far as the courts of justice watched the lawless incarcerations, the torturing, and the mass-murders without interfering, the preceding process of squeezing out the Jews was effected in "legal" form, and must, to a great extent, be laid to the account of the law-officers and magistrates, who provided the cloak of "legality." In order to draw the appropriate conclusions one must keep in mind that these "laws" and semi-legal methods were not the expression of a sudden outburst of *furor teutonicus* and that they could not be excused by the familiar German pretext, *c'est la guerre*, an excuse which was indeed offered, at a later stage, with regard to the death sentences of German courts of law in the enslaved countries. The "legal" pillage of the German Jews had been methodically excogitated, prepared, enacted, and perpetrated, since the very moment when the seizure of power by the Nazis had loosened the constitutional and the traditional moral brakes. For in the beginning of their régime, so long as the Nazis were afraid of the possible economic and political consequences which might ensue if it should too soon become obvious that private property was no longer safe in Germany, it seemed preferable to use "legal" methods even against the Jews--and the wisdom of these tactics was confirmed by the continued support which, for a considerable time, Nazism received from many wealthy circles abroad. Not until the war broke out was the cloak of legality openly dropped, and the straightforward method of wholesale murder and open confiscation applied.

But the refined "legal" maltreatment of the German Jews is also particularly interesting because the attentive reader will be able to trace here, as in so many other fields,<sup>1</sup> the pattern which was later used by the Germans in oppressing and expropriating, by "lawful means," the inhabitants of the conquered countries, without regard to "race." He will recognise in the "Germanisation" of the industry and trade of the vassal States the methods which had been tried out in the "Aryanisation" of Germany.<sup>2</sup> It was easy enough, indeed, to brand an upright Dutchman, Belgian, or Frenchman as an opponent of the New Order, and therefore a "noxious individual," in order to expose him to the notorious methods which had proved so successful in the fight against the German Jews. We may go still farther. We shall find in these "lawful" forms of procedure also certain precedents for the tactics used by the Nazis in the diplomatic field and in dealing with the law of nations. The misuse of the *clausula rebus sic stantibus* and the empty assertion that agreements were obtained

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 81-82, 213-215.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 127-130, 160-170

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by misrepresentation<sup>1</sup> were also among the favourite arguments of Hitler in repudiating inconvenient international treaty obligations. And is not the system applied against the German Jews—gradually progressing from hypocritical “legality” to unabashed confiscation—the very same method which Nazi Germany continually applied in her political and economic dealings with her weaker neighbouring States? In these she began with enforcing oppressive trade “agreements,” and ended with the annexation of “necessary living space.” Everywhere, with the same stupendous impudence, no matter whether individuals or peoples were the victims, the same principles and methods, developed on the basis of the new “world-philosophy,” were applied for the same all-important purpose of establishing by way of force the “right” of the “racially superior have-nots.”<sup>2</sup> But in spite of the efforts to veil the robberies under a shabby cloak of formal legality, instead of simply referring, after the fashion of Mussolini, to the law of *sacro egoismo*, the burglar’s mentality, at once primitive and crafty, was transparently revealed.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 113

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 159, 213-215

## (APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII)

### THE "LEGAL" TERRORISING OF THE GERMAN JEWS AND THE APPROPRIATION OF THEIR PROPERTY

*After the earlier pogroms and boycotts,<sup>1</sup> the "legal" drive for the elimination of the Jews was systematised in 1935 by the Racial Statutes of Nuremberg, which effected a sharp separation of all persons of Jewish, or partially Jewish, extraction from the "Aryans." Many "half- and quarter- Jews" discovered the alarming fact that there was a "Jewish grandmother," or even two of them, in their family only by the new legal requirement of documentary proof of ancestry. We do not propose to dwell here upon the grief caused by the breaking up of numberless families, the countless suicides, the denunciations, the abominations of blackmail, and all the other agonies which ensued when thousands of "mixed marriages" were suddenly poisoned by the new racial laws, when many "Aryan" fathers took advantage of this opportunity to rid themselves of their wives and their "mongrel" children, and "Aryan" wives were confronted with the dilemma of severing all connection with their parents and relations, or leaving their husbands and their "racially inferior" children in the lurch. But it would be wrong to omit all mention of such minor tragedies because of the greater disaster that followed. For the family remains the focal centre of human life, and the perfect indifference with which the German people, even at a time when they were less "inured" than now, looked on at the deliberate destruction of so much human happiness, should have given the world cause for reflection. We also shall not enlarge upon the private sufferings which are even now the lot of many German refugees, as when the husband and wife have remained together "in the interest of the children," and, after a time, the "Aryan" partner has begun to resent the loss of home and relations, and has found himself—or herself—unable to accept the common fate without an occasional embittered reference to his or her "racial superiority"—a not very uncommon occurrence, which in itself has a certain significance as to the German mentality.*

*All those "Jewish-related" functionaries of the State, and officials of the boroughs and corporations, who had escaped the earlier purges, were dismissed under the new laws. No court of justice questioned the "legality" of the decrees—all of them contrary to the Constitu-*

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 75-81



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tion—or of the suppression of the pensions to which the dismissed officials were entitled. Next came the turn of the professional classes, and again there was no sign of any judicial help when licences were withdrawn and practices stolen.<sup>1</sup> Then followed the great “economic purge.” Employers got rid of their Jewish employees without compensation, when a new decree, cunningly cloaked as a social reform, forbade the employment of any person not belonging to Dr. Ley’s “*Arbeitsfront*,”<sup>2</sup> which, of course, did not admit Jews as members. This mode of procedure had the great advantage that the claims of the dismissed employees could be suppressed without the publicity of the law courts, though some Courts of Labour<sup>3</sup> had already of their own accord denied the claims of Jewish employees who had been turned into the street—the presiding magistrates arguing that “managers could not expect their Aryan employees to work together with Jews any longer.” The premiums for old age and health insurance, which had been paid for years by the Jewish employees, were likewise lost through their non-admission to the new labour organisations, so that these unfortunates became a burden on public charity. But a “legal” solution was quickly found enabling the boroughs to refuse the payment of relief. All Jews were formed into a special organisation, which had to take upon itself the burden of relief, though it was difficult to see by what funds the means were to be provided. For in the meantime the property of the wealthier Jews had been almost entirely destroyed by the progress of “Aryanisation.” The German Jews began to look abroad for safety, and in 1937 the great exodus began, when it somehow leaked out that Goebbels had informed his officials that “after 1938 there would be only Jewish beggars left in Germany.”

The general “legal” raid on Jewish property was initiated by the misuse of taxes and duties as a means of expropriation. At first the Jews were excluded from all “privileges” in respect of taxation. That sounded fairly innocuous. The Jews, after all, could not claim “privileges.” But the decree assumed another aspect when it was seen what was really intended. All children’s allowances were held to be “privileges,” so that a Jewish father of four or more children had to pay a bachelor’s income-tax. The so-called “hardship relief” was a “privilege,” so that all Jews who had suddenly lost their entire income had, nevertheless, to pay their former rates and taxes for another year. Naturally, many of them could not find the money, and lost all their goods and chattels through forced sales.

As it was regarded as undesirable that the intention to proceed

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 78-80.

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 171

<sup>3</sup>Cf p. 111

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to the total liquidation of Jewish property should become prematurely known, the abolition, as regards the Jews, of "privileges," allowances, and hardship relief was made to serve as a useful method of squeezing the Jews "legally" out of their landed property. Jews had henceforth to pay the full amount of rates, even if their houses stood empty, so that in order to cover the demand notes, the unhappy owners had either to find an immediate purchaser or to suffer a forced sale. But the law went still farther. Every sale of land, shares, or jewellery, effected by Jews was henceforth subject to a special "permit." Although the many offers of Jewish property had already brought about a heavy fall in prices, it was the task of the permit-officers to ensure that on the "transfer of Jewish property to Aryan hands" even lower prices should be paid. This order was responsible for some exquisite flowers of anti-Semitic interpretation. For instance. At the sale of a house the permit-officer found that, as the Jewish owner was liable for the rates of some empty flats, he must not be allowed "to make a profit" by getting rid of his "wasting asset", the price had therefore to be substantially reduced. The objection that the purchaser would enjoy the full allowances, and that the price was already so low that he would at once receive a dividend of ten per cent. on his invested capital—and much more when the empty flats were let—elicited the rejoinder that "that was nothing to do with the Jew." This is what the transaction finally amounted to: The purchaser, of course, had to pay the price agreed upon. One-third of the amount, however, was to be handed over to the Borough—or, at all events, to the Borough treasurer who acted as permit officer. But it will suffice to consider the statutes and decrees themselves, without enlarging upon the indescribable bribery which was the inevitable outcome.<sup>1</sup>

The "legal" gambols became more and more excessive, even in such cases as fell within the competence of the Reichsbank, which was then still under the presidency of the famous Dr. Schacht.<sup>2</sup> Priceless gems of the art of legal interpretation were produced on the occasion of the "Aryanisation" of estates, factories, private banks, and other businesses, great and small. Stocks and outstanding debts were "valued" at fantastically low prices, and no payment was "permitted" to be made for goodwill—a precious windfall for the favoured purchasers—even on the transfer of the most important business houses, which had often been family properties for more than a hundred years. If, after all, a margin was still left, it was not to be paid to the expropriated owner, but handed over to a "trustee"; for

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 129, 163

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 180-181

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 79-81, 161, 165-170

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*it had to be used to pay the many duties which were so cunningly devised ad hoc that in most cases, as will appear presently, they absorbed the rest of the purchase money. Many Jews did not even try to continue the unequal, nerve-racking struggle with the Nazi authorities. They were happy if they could escape even though penniless. Many others committed suicide. A few only were tough enough to try to save something with which to build up abroad a new existence for their families.*

*The climax was approached in 1938, when a new statute obliged every Jew to notify the police of all his property, the smallest omission being punished by the confiscation of the whole and a sentence of penal servitude. The value of the single items had to be estimated by the owners themselves. This was intended to give the impression that on the imminent expropriation a small amount of compensation would be granted, and, naturally enough, everybody took good care that his estimate was not too low. Then, however, came a fresh surprise. The shooting by a Polish Jew of the German attaché Vom Rath in Paris led to the great pogroms which, with amazing punctuality, everywhere "broke out spontaneously" in November, 1938.<sup>1</sup> Buildings were burned down, valuables, pictures, and carpets were stolen or ruined, goods in the shops and store-houses dashed to pieces, and businesses closed. On top of this a fine of 1,000 million Reichsmarks was imposed upon the German Jews. It took the form of a collective "tribute" to which every Jew had to contribute one-fourth of his property, assessed according to his own estimate, which had been made before the pogroms. No doubt this "tribute" had been already intended when the cunning decree as to the declaration of the Jewish property had been issued, but now the assassination in Paris, with which, of course, the intimidated German Jews had no connection whatever, furnished a convenient moral cloak for the robbery. And how, after the pogroms, could the Jews pay this contribution? The value of their remaining property was only a fraction of the former estimate; and, quite apart from this, it is common knowledge that a capital levy can be paid only by small instalments if forced sales and bankruptcies are to be avoided. Here however, there was no notion of avoiding such consequences. On the contrary, the secondary effect, the fact that the Jews were forced in all haste to dispose of the whole of their possessions and at a scandalous price, was another welcome "legal" device for driving them quickly out of the country. When Aryan business men were thus unable to collect their money from Jewish debtors, and then could not fulfil their own obligations, this was yet another reason for decrying the "Jewish swindlers," while their creditors had to put up*

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 134.

#### THE GERMAN MENTALITY

*with the reproach that "a friend of the Jews" was only getting what he deserved if he lost his money*

*Here is one more incident deserving of mention. Some Jews had obtained an insurance policy covering the risk of riots. In these cases, according to a new, special decree, the compensation had to be paid by the insurance companies to the State. The Nazi lawgivers obviously had made the discovery that robbers ought to be indemnified for their trouble.*

*Further surprises were in store for the few Jews who still possessed something. In November, 1938, they received demands from the councils of their religious communities, requiring them to contribute "voluntarily for the repair of damage," a further high percentage of their property, again assessed in accordance with the pre-pogrom estimate. Of course, these "voluntary gifts" were not meant to make good any part of the damage suffered by the plundered Jews. This was simply a new blackmailing trick—carried out this time by Goebbels' Ministry for Propaganda on its own responsibility; for it was to this ministry that the Jewish congregations had to deliver the "voluntary gifts." When some of the spontaneous donors asked what would happen to them if they did not pay, they were informed that a refusal would mean their immediate imprisonment. This enterprise was particularly shameful, as Goebbels compelled the Jewish religious congregations to enforce the payment of blackmail even from non-Aryan Christians, who had never had any connection with them. To misuse the Jewish religious congregations as involuntary accessories to the blackmailing of Christians was a trick worthy, and at the same time characteristic, of the Nazi mentality.*

*It will be very difficult, in view of the unprecedented disorder and bribery prevailing in the Third Reich, ever to discover in detail where the millions have gone. But we may guess that this was one of the sources of the wealth of Goebbels, Goering, Streicher, and the other party bosses pilloried by Mr Knickerbocker and, of course, of many smaller criminals, who exploited this unique opportunity of filling their pockets with blood money.<sup>1</sup> A strong attempt should be made—if only for the sake of re-education—to unravel this complicated network, and to call the 'culprits to account in connection with the prosecution of war crimes.<sup>2</sup>*

*After all these "legal" bloodlettings not very much could have remained of the 12,000 million gold marks at which Jewish property in Germany had been estimated before the pogroms. But it would be a mistake to suppose that even the smallest remnant was left to the plundered Jews. A further decree compelled every Jew*

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 163

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 295, 306-307, 309-310

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who still happened to possess any jewellery, gold, silver, works of art, or carpets, to deliver these goods to appointed collectors in exchange for paper marks. The collection was so thorough that, apart from a silver watch, and one knife, fork, and spoon for every person, nothing was allowed to be retained. A special order notified that artificial gold teeth need not be handed over, but that wedding rings must be. When this had been done, and when all other taxes had been paid, the "duty for leaving Germany" had to be discharged—provided that, after all, there was still a residue of money in the form of paper marks, bank accounts, or other debts. This duty (*Kapitalfluchtsteuer*) had been introduced under the Republic at the time of the economic crisis,<sup>1</sup> in order to check the export of capital in cases of voluntary emigration. It was now levied from the expelled Jews to the amount of 25% of their property retrospectively assessed according to a property tax-declaration of the year 1935, so that almost in every case it absorbed all that might have been left after the pogroms, extortions of tribute, etc. Again, if one of the victims pointed out that he need not pay this duty as he intended to remain in Germany, he was immediately taken to a concentration camp, in order to "encourage him to emigrate." If, having paid the "*Kapitalfluchtsteuer*," an emigrant still had anything left, a further device was applied for stealing the last remnant. For an emigration permit was not granted until the applicant had proved that his property, to the uttermost farthing, was deposited at one of the German banks in the form of an "emigrant's blocked deposit." Then he could leave the country provided that he was lucky enough to get an immigration permit somewhere abroad; or he could allow himself to be sent across the frontier,<sup>2</sup> with nothing but his bare skin and the comforting reflection that he possessed a "blocked deposit" in Germany. Here, let it be understood, we are still speaking of peace-time conditions. After the outbreak of the war the blocked deposits were "administratively" confiscated together with all other property of Jews who were then still alive in Germany. When, with the entrance of the U.S.A. into the war, the last reason to save appearances had disappeared, all Jewish emigration permits were cancelled and the wholesale deportations to the extermination camps in Poland began. But even then a last screw was put on such prospective victims as had well-to-do relatives abroad, in order to extort a kind of mediaeval ransom in foreign currency. High Gestapo and other officials had been prepared, now and again, to let one of their victims escape if the bribe had been great enough. This system was now "organised" by the government.

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 35.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 134-135

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*But the actual proceeds did not come up to expectations: not only because the ransom of £5,000 per head was too high, but also because the Allied governments took the only adequate course by telling the German blackmailers to do their worst, at the same time announcing that any bank or financial house that facilitated such a transaction, and any individual or firm who acted as an intermediary, would at once be placed on the black list<sup>1</sup>. A few Jews, however, were left alive, those, namely, who possessed property in neutral countries from which they received rent or dividends in foreign currency. The Nazis were too smart to abandon such valuable "assets." At the same time, however, a decree was issued enacting that on the death of a German Jew his property went to the Reich in any case. This was a device for repudiating beforehand in a "legal" manner all inconvenient claims of potential heirs and successors, living abroad, not only of the aforesaid few lucky ones, but of all the murdered German Jews.*

*Considering the "legal" situation of the German Jews under Nazi rule it must not be forgotten that, in addition to the robberies described, all kinds of mental torture were applied by "lawful means," and with the help of the courts of justice, before the final measures for their extermination were put into effect. To make sure that the dogma that legal decisions were no longer to be made without respect of persons was strictly observed, every Jewish individual had to adopt the additional name of "Israel" or "Sarah," and, on entering a law-court, to acknowledge himself as a Jew by showing the special Jewish passport. This decree was issued before all the Jews were forced to wear a large yellow star upon their clothes. Jews, under Nazi law, could be represented before the courts only by Jews. Thus, when the Jewish barrister-solicitors had been dismissed, together with the Jewish doctors,<sup>2</sup> a few Jewish "syndics," not entitled to the privileges of other lawyers, had to be reluctantly admitted for the time being, because the rules of procedure did not allow a plaintiff or a defendant to conduct his case before a higher court without legal assistance. What could such a "Jewish syndic," intimidated as he was inevitably by every frown of the judge, hope to achieve for his client, as against the public prosecutor, or a Nazi barrister, who knew how to take advantage of his privileged position? The game of cat and mouse had to be played with rules which differed even from those observed in proceedings against other "enemies of the State." There was no question of*

<sup>1</sup>A similar attempt, at bartering the Hungarian Jews for war materials, was made at a later stage of the war. Cf. p. 223

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 78-80

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 113-114

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*the credibility of a Jewish plaintiff or witness, and the feelings of a Jewish defendant may easily be conceived when he saw himself confronted by a bench which was purged of every upright magistrate, and was bound in advance to regard him not merely as an inferior being, but as a noxious brute, capable of every crime. The judgments delivered, as may be seen in many law reports, fully justified the hopeless despair of the Jewish defendants. If they defended themselves vigorously they were accused of "typical Jewish impudence", if they did not, they were reproached with "trying in vain, by disgusting servility and underhand methods, to obtain the favour of the Court." The very acme of hypocrisy was attained by the Nazi jurisdiction if one of these humiliated people was caught in the attempt to flee from the German hell with a remnant of his property. The sentence of penal servitude was then always accompanied by a flood of bombastic talk about the defendant's "dishonesty in destroying the wealth of the German people" Indeed, only a Nazi "Court of Justice" could find such terms to express the wrath of a brigand who has caught one of his victims trying to escape with what personal possessions he can carry on his person*

*The final stage of the "legal" treatment of the Jews was reached in 1943 by a decree which put them definitely beyond the law. It ordained that henceforth their affairs would be dealt with only by the Gestapo*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GESTAPO MENTALITY

*The powerful position of the Gestapo—Gestapo mentality the essence of Nazism—Permeation of the whole of public and private life with the spirit of the Gestapo.*

SOME kind of secret political police force has always been an inevitable concomitant of despotic government, being as it is the tyrant's main instrument for spying on the population and nipping in the bud any revolutionary movement. On the other hand, the inherent evil methods of such a force—the provocation of political "crimes," the extortion of "confessions," and the infliction of "administrative punishment"—have from of old been regarded with abhorrence by all civilised peoples. Thus the fact itself that an institution of such a kind could be re-established in Germany, without much opposition from a people with a comparatively high standard of knowledge, which had enjoyed, even under the Imperial régime, *Habeas Corpus* and a well-administered system of justice, and which had known full

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political liberty under the Republic of Weimar, should suffice to arouse our suspicions that something must be wrong with the mind of the German people. The question spontaneously arises whether there is not some intrinsic connection between the mentality of the Gestapo (*Geheime Staats Polizei*) and the general mentality of the Germans.

This chapter is to give the reader a little more detailed knowledge of the mentality of the Gestapo itself and also of what we should call the Gestapo mentality of the German people as a whole. To understand this peculiar, popular state of mind and how it developed, we must, above all, try to apprehend the horrid, fearful atmosphere prevailing in Germany under the rule of the Gestapo. But we must also understand that the mentality of the Gestapo itself merely reflected the mentality of Nazism, and the spirit of its leaders, in a concentrated form. Again we must keep in mind the basic mental morbidity and infectivity of the German people, which for years before the "seizure of power," in 1933, had been imbued by a vast propaganda campaign with the Nazi spirit. We have to observe how in the mephitic atmosphere the mentality of the Gestapo gradually infested ever-widening circles, and depraved and poisoned more and more the popular sense of morality and decency.

After 1933 one could not really understand any event in the life of a German without considering how far it was influenced by the Gestapo, or by his fear of it. It may be worth while to quote Mussolini, whose occasional bluntness in exposing the principles of totalitarianism has at times presented a peculiar contrast with Hitler's unflinching hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> The Duce had declared, as early as 1923, that "the gendarme is the true symbol of the totalitarian State." In Nazi Germany the Gestapo supervised the education, the religious beliefs, the economic activities, and the private affairs of one and all, including the army and its officers. Even among the crews of the German U-boats and aircraft some of the sailors and observers were usually members of the Gestapo. Super-spies were appointed to watch the Gestapo men. A German Minister of Justice admitted frankly, years before the war, that it was not for him, or for the Law Courts, to interfere with the "administrative" jurisdiction of the Gestapo, which was still more brutal and disgusting than that of the "People's Courts,"<sup>2</sup> because the Gestapo was not bound to any law whatever, but inflicted its secret punishments in a perfectly arbitrary manner. From the very beginning the Gestapo had unlimited power to imprison for any length of time, or even to kill on

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 123, 137, 139, 209.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 116



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some lame pretext, and without even the suspicion of any crime, anybody whose disappearance was regarded as "desirable in the interest of the State"; and it needs no saying that, under a savage and corrupt Party rule, a Nazi functionary could easily destroy an inconvenient personal adversary by making a false denunciation to the Gestapo.

The organisation had first been developed, on the lines of the "Feme Courts" of the "Volunteer Corps,"<sup>1</sup> by one of the most sinister figures of the Nazi gang, a former major of the *Reichswehr*, Buch. Already in 1926 he had formed the so-called "Black Hundred," that guard of terrorists which had to "protect" Hitler and the Party by "liquidating" all potential enemies. Buch was the man who, on June 30th, 1934, with his rapidly increased Security and Intelligence Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*—S D) executed the death sentence against Röhm and his adherents, which the Supreme Party Court had passed under his own chairmanship.

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that even in peace time no decent man could know on going to bed whether or not the Gestapo would come for him during the night. It might be that a colleague had denounced him or that his own child, misled and instigated by the "Hitler Youth," had betrayed him on the strength of a casual remark made in the bosom of his family. The victim seldom learned the name of the informer. Priests were arrested for suspect remarks in a prayer offered up during the children's service, or in the instruction preparatory to confirmation. Every flat had its "warden," listening at doors or pressing an ear against the thin walls of a neighbour's dwelling, hoping to overhear conversation "dangerous to the State," or to note that a foreign broadcast was being received. A watch was kept on private intercourse, and social gatherings had to be notified beforehand to the police. There were always fearful whispers as to who had recently been "fetched," in the circles of those who were known as former Democrats, Liberals, Marxists, Freemasons, faithful Christians, and "friends of the Jews." As to the latter, one could but smile when the more decent circles in Germany tried for a time to persuade themselves and others that the pogroms which occurred immediately after the "seizure of power," had been "deplorable, but unavoidable, concomitant phenomena of the national revolution." Only too clearly the hand of the Gestapo, acting through and together with the Hitler Guards, could be detected in these "spontaneous outbursts of the people's fury," which always occurred punctually on the same day in the most distant regions of Germany, and

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 118-120, 163

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 30-31, 40-41

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died down again with the same punctuality. Nor did any of the pretended "outbursts" against Catholic and Evangelical clergymen, or the attacks upon churches, monasteries, and religious orders, which developed with the same curious punctuality, bear any of the characteristics of a spontaneous riot. If there had still been any doubt as to who had pulled the wires, it was dispelled by the fact that none of the perpetrators and originators of the outrages, or of the innumerable political assassinations of anti-Nazis, were ever prosecuted. Before the great pogrom in 1938 houses were carefully inspected by the Gestapo before "releasing them for plundering," in order that no "Aryan" with a Jewish-sounding name should be molested through inadvertence. One lady, who on the occasion of such a preliminary inspection anxiously tried to make their visitors understand that she was "Aryan," although her husband was of Jewish extraction, reported to the author the classic remark of the superior officer to his men: "We'll have to demolish in any case." After 1938 even the habitual pretext that the arrest was made in order "to protect the prisoner from the fury of the people," was no longer necessary in the case of Jews. Their individual persecution was replaced by mass hunting. The Gestapo declared openly that they had to catch 5,000 Jews in Berlin, as many in Munich, 3,000 in Hamburg, and so on. Still, this was only a measure of terrorisation, in order to "encourage emigration", for they had not yet definitely decided to exterminate the Jews altogether,<sup>1</sup> but they wanted to get rid of them, and in any case to steal their property. This first wholesale rounding-up of the Jews in all publicity, and the "success" of the simultaneously arranged great pogroms, was highly significant of the progress which the systematic brutalisation of the Germans had made since 1933. But these events were particularly noteworthy also as an early attempt by the Gestapo at testing and exploiting the effect of terror on the minds of foreign peoples. Here we could observe, in another field, a specimen and forerunner of that famous invention of the Nazi-Gestapo mentality, the "war of nerves."<sup>2</sup> Like the later attempts to obtain ransom by blackmail and the bartering of the Hungarian Jews for war materials,<sup>3</sup> it was the purpose of the anti-Jewish terror measures of 1938 to persuade those who naively believed in the existence of certain limits to human savagery that the devilish menace, "to exterminate the Jewish vermin altogether," might really be carried out if otherwise they could not get rid of them. Knowing that the majority of the arrested Jews could not hope to obtain

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 81, 129

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 198, 202, 214, 255

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 129-130, 223.

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immigration visas for another country, the Gestapo relied successfully on the "weaker" minds of other peoples, who, under the pressure of the sufferings of thousands of innocent human beings, would offer asylum to those who were not obliging enough to die in the concentration camps. This purpose was clearly revealed when the victims, in troops of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, were driven at night across the frontiers of neighbouring countries.

When the invasions started crowds of Gestapo officials arrived in the conquered countries together with the German troops. Their first action was to close the frontiers. They had carefully prepared lists, on which not only those Germans who had withstood the pressure to join the "Organisation der Auslandsdeutschen" were marked "for future treatment," but also foreign citizens who had become known as opponents of the "Fifth Column." They too had now to learn what the German "Liberals, Marxists and Freemasons" knew from experience; and with what shuddering despair must all the refugees in Prague, in Paris, in Poland, Holland, Denmark, Belgium and Hungary have heard the terrible news that the Gestapo was again on their track! As a general thing the Jewish citizens of the conquered countries, whose fortunes the Nazis wished "to put into their pockets"—as Goering had frankly admitted—were again the first victims of robbery, deportation, and slaughter. Then followed the mass huntings of working slaves, the torturing and incarceration of resisters and political suspects in ever-increasing numbers, and all the dirty work which the military commanders liked to have done by the Gestapo.<sup>2</sup>

The atrocities committed in the German concentration camps were far too long ignored by a great part of the European Press, particularly in pre-war times. When they eventually were published many people in this and other countries, especially those who once had friends in Germany, were unwilling to accept what they believed to be exaggerations and calumnies. As, however, since the liberation of the camps at Buchenwald, Belsen, Dachau, etc., these terrible things have obtained full publicity,<sup>3</sup> we may refrain even from

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<sup>1</sup>A similar list which had been prepared for Britain was found after the occupation of Germany, and published by H M Stationery Office in September, 1945 Cf p 257

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 209, 256-257

<sup>3</sup>Cf inter alia, White Books on "Persecution of Jews" and "Punishment of War Criminals, H M Stationery Office, 1945 Statement of Dr Schwarzbart, member of the Polish National Council in London, of November 22nd, 1943 Reports of the French Government on the torture chambers of the Gestapo in Paris, of the 21st British Army Group on the Brendonck concentration camp, of the House of Commons' Committee on Buchenwald, and the trials of the war criminals of Belsen, etc The publication of a comprehensive record of the German War Crimes has been promised in the House of Commons, as soon as the United Nations' War Crimes Commission has completed its work

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quoting those few examples which were mentioned in the first version of this book. But we should like to stress the point that the very same things which have now evoked the abhorrence of the whole world have been events of daily occurrence in the German camps since 1933, and that the victims were German Jews and opponents of the Nazis, a few of whom are now living abroad as refugees. Years before the war lists of prisoners with the fatal note "shot while escaping" against their names were delivered by the central office to the administrations of the camps before the execution took place, and every one of the few prisoners who were released had to sign a declaration pledging him not to reveal anything he had observed in the camp.

Consider, furthermore, the murder of war prisoners, the "reprisals" on members of the families of alleged "enemies of the State and saboteurs," inside and outside of Germany, the mass killing in the conquered countries of innocent hostages, who had to dig their own graves and were forced to witness the torturous execution of those whose turn came first, the "retributive justice" of burning down hundreds of villages, of which Lidice and Oradour are only examples, the "preventive measures" taken against a potential resurrection of the enslaved peoples, by destroying their spiritual life, pulling down their national monuments, robbing them by commandos of specialists, the so-called "Art-Corps," of their most valuable works of art, closing their High Schools, exterminating their national intelligentsia,<sup>1</sup> and poisoning public opinion by applying to their press the refined method of alternate persecution and bribery—consider this whole system, and you will perceive something of what we propose to compress into the one compound word, "Gestapo-mentality."

When we survey the activities of the Gestapo as a whole, it is apparent that they are far more significant than such familiar outrages as are characteristic of every secret political police force. The Gestapo did not play the secondary part of a troop of indispensable bravos; it had risen to be the greatest political institution of the Third Reich, inferior in importance not even to the Army, and comparable to the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. It is obvious, also, that the crimes of the Gestapo cannot be regarded merely as the deeds of Himmler, Sepp Dietrich, Heydrich, Daluge, Kaltenbrunner, and certain other chiefs, but that these men in their sphere were representative of the real mind of Nazism itself, just as Goebbels was in the sphere of propaganda. As the police-mentality of Fouché has been discovered behind the whole French policy of his time,

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 256

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 104

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so the "Gestapo mentality" can be traced everywhere in the policy of the Nazis. It was the genuine offspring of, and deeply rooted in, the "world-philosophy" of Nazism itself: "All means must be applied to enforce the right of the stronger—first inside Germany, and then throughout the world—the Germans being the masters, and Hitler the master of the Germans."

As the Gestapo had not merely to do the dirtiest and bloodiest part of the work, but to survey and enforce the carrying into effect of the principles of Nazism in every sphere of life, its own mentality must necessarily constitute the psychological core of Nazism. Those rather naive people, Germans and non-Germans, who for a time tried to contest that the actions of the Gestapo really corresponded with the fundamental ideas of Nazism and with Hitler's own intentions, or the Gestapo mentality with that of the Leader, were labouring under a sad delusion. Not only has Hitler never dissociated himself from the Gestapo, or suggested that their activities did not truly realise the Nazi ideals, but there is plenty of positive evidence as to the identity of his own way of thinking with the Gestapo mentality. Indeed, he had to be regarded as its very personification. It will appear in greater detail at a later stage of our enquiry that the leading characteristics of the Gestapo mentality—brutality and hypocrisy—are traceable in all its political activities.<sup>1</sup> But they are equally perceptible in such personal actions as his telegram of condolence on the death of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss, whom he had just caused to be murdered, and his secret order that the imprisoned Chancellor Schuschnigg, when he was dangerously ill, should not be taken to hospital. Nor should we forget the case of Pastor Niemöller.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that the vilest so-called "disciplinary punishments" inflicted in the concentration camps were devised and ordered by the "Leader" himself, though he was not really "creative" even in this respect. For he had learnt much from his model Mussolini, and we must also note the fact, significant as it is of the German mind, that certain methods of torture similar to those used in the concentration camps had been familiar during the Great War in German barracks and military prisons in the case of soldiers who were suspected of "malingering." Hitler's personal brutality, incidentally, was plainly revealed, already, when, on that fatal 30th June, 1934, he was not content with the massacre of his underlings, but took part in it himself, and again in 1944, when he ordered the slow and torturous hanging of the officers involved in the conspiracy against him and gloated over the film showing the execution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 120

<sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 117

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We have just named brutality and hypocrisy as the leading characteristics of the Gestapo mentality. But are not these also the most significant qualities of the Nazi conception of "honour" and, indeed, of Nazism itself? The Gestapo mentality, if it is not simply the Nazi-mentality in a pure culture, is at least a most essential ingredient of it. It follows that every man who called himself a staunch Nazi must also possess his full share of the Gestapo-mentality. Indeed, we must include among its bearers not only the Gestapo officials themselves, not only the SS, and the so-called "Waffen SS," the military offspring of Hitler's black uniformed bodyguard, which for years already had been officially affiliated with the Gestapo — but also the whole body of "political soldiers" comprised in the SA and the mass of the Party members. They not only solemnly swore allegiance to the Nazi "world-philosophy," but they always considered themselves, and were in fact as a whole, Hitler's Praetorian guard. We should fall into a pure delusion if we were to differentiate between the mentalities of these various groups. The opinion once held that within the large SA group in particular there were substantial numbers of "unreliables" has proved to be without foundation. The anonymous bravos of numberless foul deeds, the executors of the "popular fury" in the former pogroms, and in the attacks upon the Churches, the hangmen of the concentration camps, and, at a later stage, the murder-squads who by "fire and sword," or, in more modern fashion, with rubber truncheons, machine-guns and gas chambers, had to maintain "peace and order" in the conquered countries, were pretty equally drawn from this élite of absolutely callous terrorists, who even before the war numbered more than a million men. They could be relied upon to act in just the same way in the German hinterland, for they knew very well that they were doomed to stand and fall with the régime.<sup>2</sup> Thus when, in 1942, the first major military setbacks of Germany had produced some uneasiness in the population, they were formed into a united organisation bearing the significant name of the "Inner Front," and in the summer of 1943 the Gestapo chief Himmler was appointed by Hitler as Minister of the Interior and Plenipotentiary for the Administration of the Reich. The concentration, at the Fuhrer's order, of the whole administration in the hands of the chieftain of the Gestapo confirmed beyond doubt that the notorious mentality of this man was considered by the highest Nazi authorities as representative of the very spirit of Nazism. Thus it was by no means merely a requirement dictated by dire necessity, but a perfectly logical development, when,

<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 158

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 170, 276-277

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after the discovery of the officers' plot in 1944, all military forces inside Germany were placed under the command of the Gestapo chief, who, at the same time, was entrusted with the task of carrying out a new ruthless purge of the officers' corps in the field. It is worthwhile to note that—quite in accordance with the Nazi “transvaluation of moral values”<sup>1</sup>—the official announcement of Himmler's appointment as Plenipotentiary of the Reich did not fail to mention “the great cultural(!) activity which had always been displayed by Himmler and by the organisation led by him.” A great propagandist action was launched at the same time in order to popularise the “kindness of this great German.” Materially it did not make much difference now, for, with the new immense powers concentrated in his hands, Himmler gradually became “the master of the master.” For it was exactly the same mentality which “inspired” both these men and all their activities. But it was symbolical, at all events, that the chieftain of the Gestapo and the most outspoken exponent of the Gestapo mentality now represented the highest authority in Germany, next to Hitler himself.

The Gestapo mentality, however, has penetrated far deeper into the German masses than even the numbers of Hitler's active “Kämpfer” would suggest. Almost every section of the population has furnished ample evidence of its infected state of mind. The captains of industry, the great landowners, and other representatives of wealth, obsessed by their anti-Bolshevist complex, full of hatred against democracy, and dreaming of harnessing Hitler to their own carriages, had been the financial accoucheurs of Nazism. They shared, with utter ruthlessness and lack of scruple, in the rich booty obtained by the robberies which were committed against “enemies of the State and unreliaables” at home and in the enslaved countries, and it was for purely opportunist reasons only that, on scenting the approaching defeat of Germany, they tried to dissociate themselves in time from their Nazi friends<sup>2</sup>.—Gestapo mentality! The reader knows how the officers of the old army, the government officials, and numberless members of the nobility, who were deprived in the Weimar Republic of their monopoly of access to place and power, forgot all their “traditions” and were quick to take part in the scramble to join the Hitler movement. The middle classes, the tradesmen, and the farmers had eagerly accepted the racialism and super-pan-Germanism of the Nazis, and their doctrine that “Democrats, Marxists and Jews” were to be blamed for almost all the evils in the world<sup>3</sup>; they, too, had derived personal advantage

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 51, 57, 87, 94, 101, 170, 195.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 39-40, 43, 67, 165-166, 174, 192, 235-237

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp 28, 30-34, 39-40, 64-65

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from the Aryanisation" and Nazification of Germany —Gestapo mentality! We have noted the pitiable and cowardly attitude of the great majority of German scientists towards the advancing Nazis, the wild chauvinism of the reserve-officer-grammar-school-teachers who impressed the "world philosophy" of Nazism upon their pupils, the return to savagery of many German doctors, and the shameless exploitation of the "racial theory" by the professional men' —Gestapo mentality!

The worst of all is that the German youth as a whole must be included among the bearers of the Gestapo-mentality. The education imparted by the schools and the youth organisations achieved the intended effect. German youth laughed at religion and Christian ethics; it had learned to deify the Leader, to despise all "racial inferiors," and to believe in the right of the strongest and the axiom that all means were permitted that served the interest of the Master-People as the Fuhrer understood it. A whole army of youths was enrolled in the Hitler guards, and among the torturers who made murder their pleasure were numerous juveniles of both sexes. Many of them are brutalised and corrupted to such a degree that it is extremely difficult to see how they can ever be re-educated.<sup>2</sup> The leader of the horde of excited youths who, long before the war started, by order of the Gestapo destroyed and plundered the archiepiscopal palace in Vienna was a boy of only sixteen.

While our observations on the behaviour of the various social and economic strata have provided a kind of horizontal section of the German mind, the bearing of the German youths, recruited from all classes, gives us a vertical section. But there are many other indications to confirm the fact that the Gestapo mentality of the present German generation is no matter of class or sex. The Nazi bait, the appeal to the basest instincts of covetousness, violence, race-hatred, and intolerance, was swallowed with appalling readiness by the German people as a whole. Just as, before the war, they had been anxious not to miss their chance of profiting by the "Aryanisation" of Germany, just as, during the war, they manifested no scruples in exploiting the enslaved peoples and the foreign working slaves, so they were greedy to secure their share of the booty when, after the war, the wealth of a subjugated world should come to be distributed among the Herrenvolk.<sup>3</sup>

The most instructive phenomenon, however, remains the general

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 52-54, 79-80, 103-105, 120-121

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 101, 321-322.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 54-55, 60, 153-155, 193-195, 229-231



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indifference, in peace and war, in respect of publicly known atrocities. We have seen, and shall further observe in other contexts,<sup>1</sup> how the excessive touchiness peculiar to the Germans had always contrasted with their ruthlessness towards others. The attitude of the average Germans as regards the concentration camps in their own country was—to say the least—one of lethargic indifference. Their assertion that the conditions in the camps, or even their very existence, had been unknown to the public, demands too much from our credulity. True, the most deplorable details may not have been very widely known. But the author can personally testify that not only the existence of the camps, but also the customary torturing and killing of the inmates was common knowledge in Germany from 1933 onwards.<sup>2</sup> The behaviour of the German public during the Jewish pogroms and the public mass hunting of the Jews was in outspoken contrast to the sensitive reaction of the public in Paris and Lyons, for example, when Laval imitated the German brutalities. In Germany even the decent people had confined themselves to averting their eyes, while the majority were either pleased or unmoved, and many of the onlookers were quick to pocket some of the fine things thrown out of the windows. When, at a later stage of our enquiry, we come to discuss the so-called "army mentality,"<sup>3</sup> we have to refer to the fact that German atrocities in modern wars, like the earlier cruelties committed against the Poles in Prussia and the massacres of native peoples in the colonies,<sup>4</sup> have always been readily overlooked by "good Germans," and excused with a shrug of the shoulders and a superficial "C'est la guerre." The same thing happened again after the Spanish expedition. As the writer himself was able to observe, nothing but admiration was felt for the young toughs who returned from Spain. Perhaps if the victorious nations had not allowed the crimes committed by Germans on land and at sea in the Great War to be hushed up as they were, perhaps if the guilty persons had then suffered a well-deserved punishment, parents and relations might have exercised betimes a wholesome influence on the youthful adventurers who were chosen to try out in Spain the new weapons of "total war"; and it may well be that a timely and unmistakable manifestation of disgust in Germany itself would have decisively modified the German methods of warfare. As to the outrages in the recent war, there can be no doubt that from the reports of eye-witnesses, from foreign broad-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 7, 60, 144-146, 149-150

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 46, 313-314

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 147-148, 156, 252-256

<sup>4</sup>Cf p 151

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casts, and from many other sources, the truth was early known in the German hinterland. Enough, in all conscience, was revealed even by the official films to the successfully "inured" German public, and assuredly they cannot have seriously believed that atrocities were committed only as measures of "retaliation and necessary defence against Jews, Poles and Russian Bolshevists." That no deep and genuine repugnance was ever manifested, in Germany, even against the well-known deportations of women for service in brothels, or the mass slaughter of hostages—quite apart from the fact that at any time Germans enough could be found to devise, organise, order, and execute all these crimes—demonstrates clearly how deeply the Gestapo-mentality has infected the German masses, and paralysed all natural good qualities.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GERMAN CONCEPTION OF "HONOUR"

*Public and private honour—The "heroic" ideal—Officers' honour and duelling mania. — Touchiness, ruthlessness, and boastfulness.*

*Military honour — "National honour" and the "liberation of the German brothers abroad"*

THE word "honour" has always played a prominent part in German life. There was a special officers' honour, and a students' honour, and almost every profession had its own "code of honour" in the place of rules of conduct. In the speeches of the statesmen of Imperial Germany, from Bismarck to Wilhelm II, the regard for "German honour" was the standard argument employed to justify arbitrary demands and vindictive actions, and in Hitler's manifestos an even greater emphasis has been laid upon the "honour of the German people" and of every single member of the "master race." This "honour" was cited as a pretext for the repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles, for the rearmament of Germany, the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the departure from the League of Nations, the "return home" of Austria, the "liberation" of the Sudeten Germans, and the demand for the restitution to Germany of French Alsace and Lorraine and of the former German colonies; it "justified" the onslaughts on Czechoslovakia and Poland, and inspired the struggle against Bolshevism. "German honour" was defended by beer-cellar rowdies against all who differed from them in opinion,

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and the murderers of Dollfuss "died for German honour." A more searching examination of the complicated, modern German conception of "honour" should be highly informative as regards the entire German mentality.

The distinction between public, i.e., outward, and private, or inward, honour is plain. Only he who dishonours himself by acting dishonestly suffers a loss of his private honour, which cannot be hurt by any invective from outside. He who insults or calumniates us damages only our outward or public honour, the respect which we enjoy in the eyes of others. The law can deal only with the outward honour, but it is the private honour that plays the decisive part in religion and ethics. The conception of this inner honour is deeply rooted in all civilised peoples. It reveals its most beautiful flower in Christ, whose Passion even the lowest of men respects, being conscious that all insults glance off and fall back upon the slanderers. The history of the martyrs exemplifies the meaning of private honour, and any person defamed, who suffers innocently, knows its value. It is one of the great consolations of history, through which it is possible to regain one's faith in human nature, that an irresistible reaction has often stirred the conscience of the world, even after the lapse of many years, and has enforced the rehabilitation of those who were once wrongly condemned.

Such compassionate impulses have always been rather alien to the modern Germans. Older readers will still remember, from the days of their childhood, the passion of indignation which was manifested in so many parts of the world, at the close of the nineteenth century, when it became apparent that Alfred Dreyfus had been the victim of a powerful clique. The conscience of mankind was stirred. The writer cannot forget, even to-day, his feeling of shame when he saw that in Germany the so-called educated circles could spare no more than a rather self-satisfied smile for the "exuberance" with which the world insisted that the injustice must be repaired.

Wilhelm II was an example of this mentality. He who so often and so strongly spoke of honour had always in mind only outward honour. Thus, when he had once furiously accused his Lord Chamberlain, von Kotze, of the authorship of anonymous letters libelling members of the Imperial household, he did not trouble to rehabilitate his innocent victim officially. He sent him some flowers and dismissed the matter from his mind. Obviously the Kaiser shared the feeling of most of his fellow-countrymen that to confess and apologise for a wrong was not a matter of conscience, but a somewhat ridiculous and, in any case, disagreeable necessity, which one would avoid if it were anyhow possible. In the Nazi vocabulary

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there was, of course, no room for such a subtle and "degenerate" conception as "inward" honour. Indeed, to attempt to explain to Hitler or Goebbels that by their slanders they did not injure the genuine private honour of their adversaries, whether individuals or peoples, but only their own would have been merely absurd. The assertion of such a truism is not quite useless, as it shows pretty clearly how wide is the gulf between the Nazi idea of "honour" and our own. On the other hand there can be no doubt that, however low the Nazi conception of honour has sunk, this decline was only the logical progression of a development which had begun long before their time.

The "officers' honour" of the Germans provides a paramount example of the hypertrophy of the outward aspect of "honour." A brief consideration of it is all the more instructive, inasmuch as in Germany an officer was always regarded as a higher species of human being,<sup>1</sup> and the peculiar conception of honour developed by the officer caste eventually permeated, through the German institution of reserve officers, the whole of the privileged classes, and also, to some extent, by way of the human instinct of imitation, the less "cultivated" middle class. Apart from this, we shall realise how cunningly Hitler, in his reforms of military education, exploited the nation-wide sense of a merely outward honour, in order to inflate the self-conceit of the Germans, until they imagined themselves a "Herrenvolk" and were ripe for his policy of conquest and world domination.

A visitor to Imperial Germany had ample opportunity to observe the arrogance of the army officers, parading in their pride, and always jealously watching lest there might be a potential mocker, to be punished on the spot.<sup>2</sup> Closely connected with this was the tenacious retention of the habit of duelling by the army and reserve officers, and all those who, by virtue of their university education, had obtained the privilege of "Satisfaktionsfähigkeit"—i.e., the social qualification to partake in a duel. These circles regarded their exaggerated touchiness as a sign of an especially highly developed "sense of honour," while, in actual fact, it was nothing more than a mark of typical German irritability, the reaction of imperfectly educated souls, who, unaware of what private honour means, are easily enraged when their pride is hurt in any way.

The instinct of a primitive demands that an offence—if not the offender himself—must be wiped out immediately; and the German officers and reserve officers could not be satisfied with a judicial sen-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 14-16, 19, 61-64.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 15

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tence that punished the slanderer or made it plain that a defamation was untrue. To a certain extent the German judicial practice of showing excessive leniency in libel suits<sup>1</sup> was responsible for this state of things: this leniency, again, being a consequence of social prejudice. For the judges, who themselves belonged to the duelling class, had little sympathy for a member of the privileged circles who appealed to a court of law instead of following the procedure prescribed by their special code of honour.

The duelling mania was carried to extremes. An insult offered by a social equal had always to be "washed away with blood"; and the man who did not "challenge" the offender to a duel became a social outcast, even if the absurdity of the insult itself was evident. Two main factors emerge into the foreground when with a critical eye we examine the duelling madness. The first is the cultivation of "heroism," in the one-sided German sense of reckless and death-defying courage, without regard to those ideals on which, in our opinion, true courage must be based. The German idea of "heroism," which in itself is a sign of the emptiness of their conception of "honour," forms, together with the primitive desire for immediate revenge, the basis and the intrinsic cause of their persistence in the duelling habit. The offended outward honour had to be restored by a display of personal courage, as evidence of the duellist's "heroism" — though it is highly questionable whether a duel is, in fact, even a proof of great courage in the "heroic" sense. The second point, again, illustrates a peculiar German characteristic, which has already been mentioned<sup>2</sup>—the Germans' disregard and contempt for the feelings of others, notwithstanding their own excessive touchiness. If we keep these considerations in mind, and observe the practical application of the code of "honour" of the German upper classes, which was, in fact, merely a code of "etiquette," we shall gain an invaluable insight into their whole mentality.

An officer who had seduced his comrade's wife had no scruples as to shooting and killing, into the bargain, the betrayed husband, who was obliged to challenge him. This it should be said, was a quite familiar case. From the German standpoint the seducer's (outward) honour was injured neither by the seduction of the wife, nor by the killing of the husband in the duel; he did not feel the disgrace which he had inflicted on his private honour by both acts. If the deceived husband had merely the social *right* to demand satisfaction, in the form of a pistol-shot, for the injury to his public honour—for his private honour was not hurt—a normal mind would consider that this should be enough to satisfy an understandable, if primitive,

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 41, 110

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp, 7, 60, 141

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resentment of the deepest insult. But the German code of honour, by socially proscribing an offender against its rules, *enforced* the duel, and this view has been further confirmed by the extremely lenient sentences of the courts against duellists, and by the usual practice of reprieving them almost immediately after the sentence. Needless to say, any attempt to vindicate the nonsensical immorality of a pistol-duel — let alone its enforcement through social pressure — would be futile; and no amount of spurious glorification, indicating its “knightly” origin, could justify the persistence in this bloody habit, which has no relation whatever to genuine honour. It is noteworthy that even a hundred years ago Charles Dickens, when he exposed a similar violent and touchy mentality in the slave-holders of the Southern States of America, pointed to their duelling mania as a phenomenon of characteristic significance.<sup>1</sup>

As the old cock crows the young one learns. The German students had their own code for their “affairs of honour,” which included pistol duels. Apart from serious encounters, however, the imitation duels, which took the form of cheek-slashing, though they did not require any great courage, could be relied upon to give the duellist a martial appearance. It is significant that when the Republic of Weimar tried to mitigate the social distance between the classes, the students’ associations did not abandon their bloody exercises, but the youngsters of other classes initiated their own process of assimilation by aping the upper class manifestations of “honour” and “heroism.” The apprentices of the Bavarian breweries and the pupils of the hotel-school at Düsseldorf began to slash one another’s faces, while young hairdressers contented themselves with inflicting artificial scars with their razor blades. This was by no means intended to bring ridicule upon the duelling mania of the higher classes—the Germans are almost entirely lacking in a sense of self-criticism and self-irony<sup>2</sup>—it was done with the greatest seriousness. Indeed, these imitations were evidence of something more than a mere urge to rival the higher social classes. The similarity of the scar-covered German youth to the warriors of barbarian tribes in their war paint indicated a similarity of “ideals.” The bullying exhibitionism which, under the cloak of “honour,” expressed itself in the arrogant conceit of the officers, and in the stubbornly preserved duelling habit—like the general German tendency toward boasting and showing off, which again and again has impressed foreign observers so unfavourably — all this is based on a deeply-rooted, primitive, and almost atavistic idolatry of a false heroism.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Dickens, *American Notes*.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 8-9, 60

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We have pointed to Hitler's virtuosity in playing on the strings of the German mentality. It was another shrewd touch of his when, some years after his first great coup—the revival of the uniform, and the admission to officer rank in his guards of all "reliables," irrespective of their parentage — he again harped on the German love of showing-off and the popular sense of outward honour by allowing his political soldiers, including every foolish Hitler-Youth, to carry a dagger when in uniform. Now they could flatter themselves that they were all genuine knights!

Yet more illuminating is the manner in which Hitler exploited the German conception of honour in the education of his new forces. The democratic aim of education—to build up individual character on the basis of mutual respect between human beings and peoples—had always been antithetical to Prussian principles, as it was to the whole Nazi "world-philosophy." From the German standpoint, the fostering of the finer and subtler feelings could only result in effeminacy. The philosophy of might demanded mass conformation to type, harshness, and disregard of feelings and opinions "alien to the German mind." The reader will remember<sup>1</sup> the traditional axiom that it was the principal purpose of all education to foster a "sound Prussian spirit," i.e., to produce obedient subjects with hardened feelings—and this applied in particular, of course, to military instruction. The Prussian corporal who showered invectives on his recruits, boxing their ears to emphasise his rebukes, did so not so much out of personal cruelty, or merely because this happened to be the traditional way of instilling "discipline." The underlying idea was that the recruit must be effectually cured of the notion that he could ever have any rights as against a superior, or that he could resent either his offensive words or blows. The theory was that the "honour" of the man was not touched if his "military educator" should strike him in the face—a daily occurrence, although as a matter of eye-wash, blows were officially forbidden in Imperial Germany. Reduced to its psychological basis—of which the N.C.O. was, perhaps, unaware, but which was carefully considered by the High Command—this was one of the weapons in the struggle against "dangerous individualism." By making the recruit understand from the very beginning of his career that no such thing as personal dignity existed in the relation of a private to his superiors, an iron discipline was assured, and the blunting of the soldiers' feelings served, at the same time, the aforesaid purpose of all education, while the numberless civil servants recruited from among the former N.C.O.s continued to transmit the desired psychic repression to the whole population

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 13-14, 16, 60-63, 100-103, 216

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It was regarded as of no consequence that this system resulted in a scandalous number of suicides of "hypersensitive" recruits; nor did it matter that it was bound to ruin the inner honour of the N.C.O.s and future civil servants, who tyrannised with impunity over their defenceless subordinates, while they in their turn were forced into servility towards their superiors. One of the most evil repercussions of this system of inuring and suppressing—a natural consequence, with regard to the human inclination to make a weaker person atone for what one has suffered at the hands of a mightier—was to be seen in the outrages committed by the German soldiery in every war,<sup>1</sup> which have greatly exceeded atrocities of such a nature in other armies.

Now it is highly interesting to note the complete revolution in the system of military education as applied by Hitler, in order to attain the same effect. The intention of quashing every trace of individualism was, of course, unchanged, or even intensified; but the old Prussian design of destroying the self-respect of the recruits was replaced by what was precisely the antithetical system. An overweening collective vanity, based on the pretended racial superiority of the "Master People," was now inculcated in the German soldiers. Indeed—in spite of the herd-instinct and the urge to obey commands—it would have been extremely difficult to uphold the humiliating methods of the Prussian drill sergeant, after all the bombastic appeals of the Nazis to the conceit of the Germans—and, perhaps one should say, after the years of freedom under the Republic. Hitler, himself a former N.C.O., was obviously aware of this. He knew very well what he was doing when he adopted new methods of military education and even, to the enthusiastic delight of the masses, threw open the officer's career to one and all, in accordance with the system successfully tried out in his own guards.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, the change of method in no way altered the spirit of the army for the better. On the contrary, outrages which once had been the spontaneous reaction of soldiers brutalized by bullying were now scientifically encouraged. They were a feature of the new kind of "total warfare,"<sup>3</sup> and a means of transforming the modern German soldier into an overbearing brute who quite seriously regarded other races as "inferiors," against whom all excesses and cruelties were permissible. The new German "military honour" was still of the familiar brand. It still concerned only the outward man, following the traditional pattern of the inflated "officer's honour"; but it was now transferred from the former officer caste to the whole army, in a vulgarised form

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 64, 242.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 252-256



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which was still further degraded by inoculation with the virus of the Gestapo.

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The artificially cultivated self-complacency and boastfulness of the Nazis had found a first easy outlet against the Jews. When an S.A. corporal spat in the face of a Jew, and his men battered the Jew to death if he betrayed any impulse to self-defence, the incident exemplified, in a debased form, the old privilege of the officer who could kill on the spot an ostensible offender of his "honour", it was a symptom of the progressive brutalisation to be seen in every walk of life. Hundreds of such cases occurred in public long before the pogroms began, and when the newspapers of foreign countries published the indignant reports of eyewitnesses, the Goebbels Press would rejoin, with its familiar "tu quoque," that one should clean one's own doorstep, instead of flying into a rage "if an impertinent Jew got a few boxes on the ears."

Again, the surprise expressed when a victim did not passively submit to violence was not in the least merely pretended; for to a German with the true Siegfried mentality it must seem a mere proof of impudence if a weaker and "inferior" party should have the courage, or even believe that he could have a natural right, to defend himself.<sup>1</sup>

Since the boosting of self-conceit in the disguise of heroism and honour was extended, in the Nazi Reich, from the small privileged class to the whole *Herrenvolk*, the opportunities for self-assertion had likewise to be multiplied. The Jews and internal "enemies of the State" could not, in the long run, provide sufficient material to feed the racial arrogance of a whole people. Under no circumstances must the national tension, which constituted the very nutriment on which the Nazi movement existed, be allowed to fall. The weaker neighbouring peoples were the predestined victims. The new methods of mass-provocation, the attacks, in the name of German honour, on the national honour of other peoples, beginning with the Czechs, showed exactly the same features to be observed in the manifestations of the outward honour of the individual *Herrenmenschen*. There was the same contempt, the same arrogant indifference of the Germans as a whole, in their attitude toward the national feelings of their neighbours, which had characterised the individual and collective attitude of the Prussian officers and the members of the privileged classes toward their subordinates and the common people, and the scandalous brutalities of the S.A. toward the Jews. There

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 9, 85, 218-220.

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was the same typical combination of morbid touchiness and irritability, and uncouth rudeness towards others, which the old Roman writers had noted in the ancient Germans, and which was strikingly manifested, before the advent of the Nazis, in the contrast between the harsh and dishonouring peace conditions imposed by the Germans on Russia at Brest-Litovsk and the clamorous German complaints of the Treaty of Versailles. The following incident was especially significant of this German phenomenon. When, at the beginning of the negotiations for an armistice toward the end of the Great War, Marshal Foch read out certain points from a sheet of paper, the German negotiator, who objected that "such conditions could not be enforced by one civilised people on another," had to swallow the rejoinder that these were not the French conditions, but those which the Germans had imposed on conquered Lille.

Contempt for the national honour of other peoples increased in accordance with the rapid sinking of the level of civilisation under the Nazi régime. The murder by Gestapo emissaries, in 1933, of a well-known German savant, Dr. Lessing, at Prague, whither he had fled after having roused the hatred of the Nazis, and the kidnapping, in Basle, by Nazi agents, of the writer Jacob, who—after some lame attempts to deny the fact—had eventually to be re-extradited in consequence of a most energetic protest by Switzerland, are a few examples which foreshadowed the coming onslaughts on the independence of Germany's neighbours. After the beginning of the war, German Gestapo-men ventured to shoot on Dutch soil a Dutch police officer—Holland then being still a neutral country—and carried his body with them to Germany. How many similar cases<sup>1</sup> may have been hushed up, because the small States concerned dared not risk "provoking" the Nazis! Again and again we noted the characteristic Nazi trick, which gave a different meaning to the same word, according as it referred to the German "honour" or the honour of another people.

The moral aspect of the matter becomes still more deplorable if we probe more deeply into the "demands of German national honour" as regards the "recovery of German soil" and the "liberation of German brothers abroad." The Nazis informed us that "the honour of the German people" peremptorily demanded the "liberation" of the German minorities living abroad and the districts colonised by them; "for the soil on which Germans are living is German." This was the familiar Pan-German slogan. The claim had, of course, nothing to do with real national honour. Bismarck,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 256 (note 3).

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the accepted protagonist of the "national honour" before Hitler, and with him an overwhelming majority of those Germans who were capable of a sane political judgment, had again and again repudiated the idea of a so-called Greater Germany as a dangerous and impracticable delusion. It had not even occurred to them that the German "national honour" was suffering from the existence of German minorities in other countries; Bismarck had not even thought of concealing the brutal motives of the rapacious Prussian policy in respect of Poland behind the threadbare cloak of a German national honour which demanded the "liberation" of Germans living on Polish territory<sup>1</sup>

One could, perhaps, have understood it if the Nazis had made the restitution of the former German Colonies a point of "honour"—though no one who knew anything of the cruel German methods of colonisation applied by men like Karl Peters, or of the Nazi plans to re-introduce the unrestricted slavery of the coloured races,<sup>2</sup> would ever have consented to entrust the Germans with a colonial mandate. But—since they did not wish to press their colonial plans for the moment, for this might have led to a precipitate conflict with the Great Powers—it seemed more advantageous to exploit the high propagandist value of "German honour" in connection with their territorial claims in Eastern Europe. It is difficult to conceive that any substantial proportion of the German people could ever have believed in earnest that their national honour was in any way involved in these claims. The case of the Germans in South Tyrol throws a spotlight on the situation. There, indeed, if anywhere, national sentiments were concerned. For a thousand years the Tyrol had been inhabited almost exclusively by Germans. The country was well known to many Germans, who year after year spent their holidays among its mountains. The famous German Minnesinger, Walther von der Vogelweide, was born in the Tyrol, and every German school-child knew the song of Andreas Hofer, who was shot at Mantua during the Tyrolese War of Independence. It is therefore particularly significant that this very district was not included among those whose liberation the German national honour demanded so urgently. There was no outcry when Mussolini forced the Tyrolese peasants to leave their homes, because he regarded the German element as a danger in this frontier region, which had to be Italianised. The German people quietly put up with the fact when the exiled German peasants were forced to migrate to Germany, and the same thing happened some time later

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 18, 211-212

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 193

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in the case of the Baltic Germans, when "cultural and economic interests," which had always been claimed as essentially German, were surrendered to the Russians. It was generally understood that it would not do to oppose Mussolini, who was still highly regarded as an Axis partner, and, in view of the then Russo-German neutrality pact, the Russian claims in the Baltic States must be treated with respect. In neither of these cases was the element present which was implicit in the Nazi German conception of national honour, and which required that the strong must take advantage of the weak. We see merely a confirmation of this awkward conclusion in the fact that, after the fall of Mussolini and the break with Russia, the evacuated Germans were hastily resettled in the Tyrol and the Baltic States.

Is any additional proof required that all the appeals made before the war to the national honour, in connection with Nazi aspirations in Eastern Europe, were so much mere cant? That they were inspired by no such exalted motive, but simply by the lust of expansion, and that the German people consciously participated in the swindle? True, a course of bombastic propaganda designed to flatter the German vanity had done something toward exciting the national passions. Nevertheless, they were by no means so seriously aroused as they may have seemed—for example, during the Sudeten crisis of 1938—to foreign journalists, who were bound to be influenced by public manifestations rather than by penetrating observations and long personal experience. The history of the "liberation of the German brothers abroad" furnishes us with ample evidence that the wave of emotion in Germany was by no means based on a deep and genuine national sentiment, that it was a rather superficial indulgence in materialistic greed and pan-Germanist excitement. Three main reasons confirm this conclusion beyond a doubt.

In the first place, just as we have seen in the cases of the South Tyrol and the Baltic, no one, not even Hitler himself, wanted to take too great a risk. This was evident in the prompt "strategical retreat" from the first attempt on Austria, when the Italians unexpectedly appeared on the Brenner in 1935. More significant still is the second reason: that there was never any real evidence, either of a general desire on the part of most of the various German brothers abroad to be liberated "from the foreign yoke," or of any firm belief among the German masses that they longed for absorption. As for Austria, the Nazi dread of a really free plebiscite already threw a dazzling light on the situation. No one really knew how many of the inhabitants of that Catholic country truly wanted to become Germans. Moreover, very few Germans were seriously con-

vinced that the Danzigers, who enjoyed complete liberty, wished to "return"; it was too well known throughout Germany that the advantages of "liberation" had to be expounded to them first very forcibly — by Hitler's "Gauleiter," Forster, himself a South German, and his S.A. and S.S. men, who were brought into the city disguised as tourists. As for the Germans in Czechoslovakia, the author himself had the opportunity of observing that in the adjoining parts of Germany the man in the street was by no means sure that the Sudeten Germans would not be perfectly contented with somewhat greater liberties inside the frontiers of the Czech State. At any rate, it was general knowledge among the labourers in the neighbouring country of Saxony that the workers in the industrial districts of Czechoslovakia did not want to "return" to Nazi Germany, although they could not express their opinion freely for fear of the army of Nazi spies. Nevertheless, after the successful overrunning of Austria the Germans were wholeheartedly in favour of the plan to incorporate all the "brothers abroad," whether they wished it or not—always provided that the necessary pre-condition, that Germany was the stronger, was clearly present; for meanwhile the encouraging conviction had gained currency in Germany that Hitler achieved all his conquests without bloodshed.

The third reason, which proves beyond doubt that the Germans did not seriously believe in the legend of the "inescapable national duty of liberating the oppressed brothers," consists in the fact that it was common knowledge—and this at an early date—that the "liberation" was by no means to be confined to districts inhabited by a majority of Germans. Hitler himself had already furnished the world with a clear, though still rather euphemistic, explanation of what was the real purpose of the clamour for "liberation," in his impressive statement that the national honour called for "new living-space." The German man in the street was well aware that it was only as a matter of policy that the newspapers refrained from speaking of expansion and annexation, since "the return of our brothers to the fatherland, a requiem of German honour," sounded infinitely better. The Germans knew that what Hitler really had in mind as regards Czechoslovakia was the annexation of the whole country. Not only did they feel it instinctively; the information given in many secret "courses of instruction" had been explicit. It was even whispered that the cry of "national honour" would make it easier for certain foreign statesmen to yield to the German demand for "a free hand in the East." The utter spuriousness of all this boastful talk of national honour was betrayed by the mood of disappointed surprise which seized upon the people when, in the September crisis

of 1938, there came a moment when a major war seemed unavoidable. Suddenly—for all the bellicose excitement of the German youth—the middle-aged and elder ones who had still some personal recollection of the less pleasant sides of the last war, felt that “the waves of indignation” and the almost incredible agitation against the “hordes of Hussites” and the “Czech Brute,” which the reader may still remember, had been aroused on the tacit hypothesis that all this was not “dangerous.” It had been the general conviction that in order to obtain what one wanted one only had to raise a sufficiently threatening clamour. Now the public feeling was very like that of 1935, when the Italian intervention had disappointed the people’s high-pitched expectation of the immediate incorporation of Austria. This time, however, the momentary shock was much more severe; for everybody was aware that Hitler’s prestige would not allow of another “strategical retreat.” Now, when the Germans understood that they might be forced to fight a European war for what they had believed it possible to appropriate without — or almost without — bloodshed, they felt highly uncomfortable on realising that they had lightheartedly ventured into a dangerous position. But if anyone supposed that this disappointment had brought the Germans definitely to their senses, that it had caused them to apprehend the moral disgrace of inflating the conception of “national honour” to a monstrous bubble growth, and of continually abusing this high ideal, which their own “world-philosophy” called the “supreme value” of a people<sup>1</sup>—then, indeed, he had a very poor notion of the German mentality. The conclusion drawn by the people as a whole, when it appeared that their anxiety had been unnecessary, and that “once again Hitler had been right to run the risk,” was expressed in a wave of enthusiastic consent to his demand for the annexation of the whole of Czechoslovakia—German or not German—as soon as the Sudeten districts had been digested. Then, as a logical consequence, when this more audacious coup had again been crowned with success, the campaign against Poland was launched on exactly the same lines. The German conception of national honour became more and more fantastic in its antics. Now, the “soul of the people, seething with wrath,” demanded the “immediate solution of the Polish question,” because it had suddenly become “intolerable to German honour” that the Polish Corridor should divide East Prussia from the Reich! The fact that in the Polish Corridor there were hardly any “German brothers” to be liberated, was of no consequence—after the precedent of the virtual annexation of Czechoslovakia. What did it matter

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 84.

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that the "soul of the people" had been quite unperturbed when the necessity of the Corridor, as Poland's access to the open sea, and the maintenance of Danzig as a Free City, had been expressly recognised by Hitler himself, only a few years earlier on the occasion of a different political constellation? Again everyone was convinced that there would be little bloodshed, and an easy march to Warsaw.

Whatever one may think of the political judgment of the Germans, no one can honestly doubt that they understood very well what Hitler really meant by such phrases as the "liberation of German brothers abroad," the "return of soil sacred to German culture," and the "denial of any intention of taking over one single individual of foreign race."<sup>1</sup> With the invasion of Moravia and Bohemia in the spring of 1939 the bad faith of the ordinary German citizen had become evident, and the subsequent onslaught on Poland—together with all that in due course befell many other countries—must have appeared as naked robbery to every honest man, German or not German. Even the most naive must have asked himself how a pretended "racial superiority" could justify the enslavement of peoples of another race and language, and by what law the Germans had suddenly become entitled to expropriate a foreign country, simply in order to satisfy a pretended need for new "living-space." \* Even the most stupid could not fail to understand that others were cynically denied what the Germans claimed for themselves by the right of the power to take it, and that one defiled both one's own private honour and the national honour of Germany by contemptuously violating the rights of others, whether individuals or peoples. The conclusion is inescapable; every single German made himself a conscious accomplice, who applauded, or with secret delight condoned, the crimes committed under the cloak of "national honour."

The hypocrisy of the average German individual of our day, and the German nation as a whole—the natural complement of their in-rooted boastfulness—is perhaps the most repulsive ingredient revealed by the analysis of the German concept of personal and national honour. For hypocrisy is the word, it is much more than mere superficiality. As to the policy of conquest, it cannot be argued that the Germans were not consulted before Hitler made his onslaughts; and pressure by the Gestapo, which condemned the better elements to silence, is no sufficient excuse for the positive attitude of the vast majority. Only too plainly did the German masses express their enthusiastic consent to every phase of the whole

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 187, 229-232.

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brutal and hypocritical policy; and we must remember that the German, and especially the Prussian, people had shown exactly the same reaction many times before in history—when Poland was divided, when Bismarck had swallowed the smaller German States and parts of Denmark, and when Alsace and Lorraine were annexed. The German “heroes” had always been apostles of the same philosophy of might, which, through the medium of tradition and education, moulded the German mind and the German conception of honour. One example, out of many, may still be mentioned, because of its striking significance. When the German troops returned from Spain, Hitler himself admitted that his earlier solemn protest against what he had then called “the insolent lies of foreign journalists” regarding the participation of German troops in the Spanish Civil War had been “mere expediency”—in other words, naked hypocrisy. Consider also the angry complaints of the Nazi press, on the same occasion, of the “offensive doubts cast on Germany’s sacred promise to fulfil the obligations of the pact of non-intervention.” When Hitler explained that “now, after all, he could speak openly,” and could give the thanks of the Fatherland to the returning soldiers, this confession of deceit may perhaps have surprised some foreign statesmen, who could not imagine that the head of a government would descend to such blatant lying; but it was certainly not surprising to the parents and relations of the soldiers who had fought in the Spanish Expedition.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Leader’s cynical admission—one of the very rare exceptions to his usual course of obstinately sticking to his lies, and being deeply offended when his critics were rude enough to speak the truth—was certainly no revelation to the majority of Germans. Now, did anyone who was living in Germany at the time ever discover in conversation with the German man in the street any trace of objection to such shameless bad faith? Or did he ever receive the impression, at a mass meeting,<sup>2</sup> for example, or on any other occasion, that those present were in any way discomfited by the falsity and dishonesty of the whole power policy? Acts of treachery committed against other peoples, obvious, in spite of all official misrepresentations, to every citizen in Germany, were so numerous that any considerable undercurrent of disgust must assuredly have been observed by foreign visitors. But there is not the slightest evidence that any notion that something terrible, base, and dishonest was being perpetrated, crossed the minds of any considerable number of Germans when Hitler made his onslaughts on the peoples whom he had assured of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 141-142, 229-230

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 231



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his friendship immediately before the invasions; or with whom, as in the case of Poland, a pact of non-aggression had been concluded, expressly providing that in the case of dissension neither party should, under any circumstances, resort to arms, but that all differences should be settled by peaceful negotiation. Even those who would much prefer to think the best of a great people cannot avoid inferring that the vast majority of the Germans are afflicted with the same dishonest mentality to which the assembly of the "elected representatives of the people" again and again gave collective expression, when the whole Reichstag rejoiced at Hitler's hypocritical and boastful tirades. His dithyrambic after the conquest of Poland, in which he slandered a brave adversary, remains one of the most disgusting examples.

After what has been recorded in other chapters it would be superfluous once more to point to the numberless crimes in all spheres of life which under the Nazi régime, and especially during the World War, have soiled the individual and collective German honour. Suffice it to mention the thousands of Germans who, in the period of triumph, allowed themselves to be "rewarded and compensated" with stolen private property<sup>1</sup> without any sense of the ignominy of becoming receivers. The reader will draw his own conclusions, on the basis of particular instances mentioned in other contexts, as to the assessment of the responsibility between individual culprits and the German people as a whole. But already the observation that the terrible moral guilt of the community and his own co-responsibility have never been, so far, repentantly realised by the man in the street, justifies the verdict that the moral level in Germany is far below that of the democratic peoples, who would never have allowed a government to drag the national honour through the mire as the Nazi government has done. It is the simple truth that it was never the public policy in Germany to foster a genuine sense of inner honour in the German people, and this explains to a large degree the lack of resistance to the Nazi "world-philosophy," and the dismal fact that the Germans were—and probably still are—actually unable to believe that other peoples, for reasons of morality and personal honour, could deny the right of the stronger, even if they felt that they were invincible.

No honest co-operation of the German people in a better future will be possible unless that sense of personal honour and decency can be restored which is, indeed, the basis of all civilisation. In this field also the victorious democratic peoples will find themselves faced with a task heroic as the clearing of the Augean stables.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 161, 183, 185.

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So much is certain, that the mystic vessel which bore the glittering inscription "National Honour," the Holy Grail which, according to the Nazi creed, contained the "supreme value" of the Master People, was filled with a nauseating ersatz-compound of hypocrisy and boasting.

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MENTALITY

*The alleged renaissance of Germany's peace economy—Concentration of powers in preparation for war.—Depravation of economic ethics—"Gleichschaltung"—Destruction of the Labour Organisation—The "Arbeitsfront"—Autarky—Anti-Capitalism and Anti-Bolshevism—Neo-Feudalism—The delusion of a Peace Conference before the War—German administration in the conquered countries—The New Order.*

THE *better world* for which we are striving will necessarily include the German people. Fantastic plans for a total forcible isolation of Germany and a permanent exclusion of the Germans from the European family of nations cannot be taken seriously. It is the question as to how the co-operation of these sixty or more millions can best be secured which forms the real problem. It is not merely one of military security and economic technique. It is in a high degree a problem of the mental assimilation of human beings of instilling reasonable ways of thinking and living into the Germans.<sup>1</sup> To understand the problem presupposes some notion of the social and economic ideals and conceptions—besides the political ones—which the Nazis have so vigorously impressed upon the Germans. In this respect, too, we must first know clearly what sort of people we have to re-educate and assimilate before we can consider how to do it. In order to attain the necessary understanding we must try to discover what were the real, as opposed to the officially proclaimed, social and economic motives and aims of the Nazi rule. Then we have to learn what were the methods used by the Nazis in these fields, how far did they affect the economic and social fabric of the country, the position of the different classes, and their relations to each other, and, above all, what was their moral effect upon society and individuals. Once again we must ask the reader to remember that it is not the purpose of this book to discuss statistics, or to utter prophecies, but to give a com-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 268. 275-276, 296-299, 310.

prehensive impression of what really was in the minds of the rulers and the ruled in Germany.

The Nazis called themselves anti-Bolshevists, anti-Marxists, and anti-Trade-Unionists. They asserted no less emphatically that they were anti-capitalists, and "liberal laissez-faire" was another of their bogies. What, after all these "antis," we were to regard as the positive social and economic foundation of Nazism is was not very easy to perceive, if we refused to accept the platitudes of a bombastic propaganda at their face value. We propose to anticipate the result of our observations in many walks of life, as it may be easier for the reader to appreciate our arguments if he knows in advance the conclusion to which they tend. We venture to assert that from the very beginning everything which the Nazis carried into effect in Germany after 1933 was intended to serve the purpose of preparing for war; that there was no other fundamental principle, no social or economic "ideal" whatsoever in the minds of the Nazis but this: to strain every nerve, to exploit everybody and everything to the utmost, for the one sole purpose of making Germany a military power of irresistible strength, in order to attack, rob, and enslave the neighbouring countries, and afterwards to enjoy an incalculably rich booty. Details of the time, form, and extent of the intended robbery were questions of expediency, depending on the development of events, and admittedly, the plan of subjugating the whole world emerged only little by little, when the initial successes in the war proved to be unexpectedly great. The basic idea, however, was complete from the outset. Declaring themselves to be "have-nots," individually and as a people, they would take what they "needed," first enriching themselves individually by stripping the German "Jews and enemies of the people," i.e., all opponents of the system; and then, after a necessary time of consolidation and preparation, collectively, by wars of aggression upon neighbouring peoples.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand the systematic development of Germany's activities in the economic field after 1933, we must adopt in imagination the view-point of a professional burglar, who is unable to regard the fragile window-pane of a jeweller's shop as a serious obstacle to his appropriation of the sparkling stones which have aroused his greed. Many of the measures of the Nazis—some are discussed here, and others may be known to some of our readers—seemed on the face of them absurd to those who were still under the delusion that the Nazis had ever honestly intended peacefully to build up

<sup>1</sup>A significant new slogan was circulated to justify this *sacro egoismo* "Was der Mensch braucht, muss er haben" (What a man needs, he ought to have)—not in the sense of a moral aim, but as a ready excuse for all kinds of thinly disguised robbery. Cf. pp. 133 and 215.

a new German economy. But they became at once understandable when regarded from the actual Nazi standpoint—that if anything seemed useful for the purposes of the intended war, it did not matter how detrimental it might be to the peace economy and the social and economic structure of the country. It was perfectly clear to the Nazis that what was still left of Germany's former wealth was to be partly eaten up, during the period of preparation, and partly employed in the building up of the gigantic war-machine—until the time arrived when the "Blitz" would yield the golden reward.

We now have to prove this assertion, which many people regarded as rather audacious when it was ventured in the first edition of this book. In order to do this, we propose to examine the developments in their two natural stages. The first stage includes the Nazi activities in Germany itself, from the "seizure of power" to the beginning of the war. Here observation will show us, above all, the moral environment in which the pretended "social and economic reconstruction" of Germany took place. Within this milieu we have to consider the social and economic theory and practice of the Nazis, the "Aryanising and transference into reliable hands" of the whole of the national economy—that is, its subjection to party control—and the killing of the Labour movement; then the "autarky" and the virtual destruction of the whole peace economy. The internal economic activities of the Nazis during the six pre-war years, considered as a whole, will afford convincing evidence that the high-flown references to "resurrection" were mere cant intended to camouflage the planned war of aggression—until the moment when there was no longer a possibility of retreat. The second stage, the act of burglary against the neighbour States, which, though successfully begun, could not be consummated, will show us the application, in the enslaved countries, of the principles of the "world-philosophy," and of the social and economic methods which had been tried out, during the first period, inside Germany; it will also give us some idea of the Nazi conceptions of "Living Space" and the "New Order."

## I

The main reason why the social and economic developments in Germany since 1933 have been so generally misjudged abroad, was the lack of any real understanding of the environment which constituted the background of the bombastically proclaimed German "renaissance." The assertion that the seeming recovery and prosperity within the Reich was an illusion, that the whole matter was in actual fact no more than the cunningly camouflaged preparation for a gigantic scheme of robbery, no longer appears improbable when

we consider what kind of people they were who undertook to rule Germany.

The new system was organised by a gang of wild adventurers, many of whom had been actual criminals before they embarked upon their magnificent new careers, a gang with a fanatical megalomaniac, himself a detraqué, a moral and psychological oddity, at the top. Hardly anything seemed impossible to their dangerously swollen mood, for, when they "seized power," they had already succeeded in the most difficult part of their task, which was to recruit a following of millions of other frustrated fanatics, prepared unconditionally and recklessly to "follow their Leader." Now, above all, their own turn had come. They regarded the bank accounts of others as the depositories of their own urgently "needed" wealth, of which its present "inferior and decadent" possessors had to be relieved as quickly as possible, and by all the various means provided in the penal code. To feather their own and their followers' nests out of the pockets of Jews and political opponents was in their eyes a perfectly legitimate procedure, clearly understood by the whole crew of fortune-hunters. Moreover, as we shall see in the course of our enquiry,<sup>1</sup> it was part of the official system of "Aryanisation and elimination of enemies of the State" to reward "worthy party members" with the extorted property, in order to "concentrate and consolidate all the economic powers of Germany in reliable hands" and under party control. It is this shocking combination of politics and private profit which constitutes the core of the Nazi economic mentality. The scheme was methodically and thoroughly put into practice, and not only the political bosses, but a great number of the leading merchants and economic masters of Nazi Germany, too, owed their meteoric rise to this system of methodical corruption.

The acquisition of an immense personal fortune by Hitler himself was a classic example of the combination of business and politics. Already for six pre-war years, every member of the Party, and all its innumerable subordinate organisations — that was, almost without exception, every adult German living in the Third Reich—was obliged to buy the "Hitler Bible." There was more than one copy of *Mein Kampf* in almost every family in Germany. To force a people of more than sixty millions to acquire an expensive book was in itself a magnificent stroke of business, but, on the top of this, the State itself eventually had to buy the *Kampf* in order to present a copy to every newly married couple. And this was not all; for all State officials were required to report to their superiors that they had duly sub-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 157, 183-185

scribed to the *Volkischer Beobachter*, the newspaper which the Fuhrer was running. The advertisement columns of this paper were filled by similar methods. These, however, were by no means the only examples of Hitler's rapacity. The Czernin case was a model of personal enrichment by way of political blackmail; and the robbing, —by no means only for the German State, but also for Hitler's private collection—of the museums of the conquered countries<sup>1</sup> of invaluable works of art is no less significant.

Nor is it of any consequence that Hitler's name did not appear on Mr. Knickerbocker's list of prominent currency-smugglers. For, unlike his Ministers, the dictator himself had no need to take precautions lest he should one day get into his own bad books; and, on the other hand, he may not have shared the sanguine belief of his colleagues that if the worst came to the worst, they could still enjoy the wealth deposited in foreign banks. Incidentally, no one can state with certainty to what extent he was interested in the currency-manipulations of the publishing firm which looked after the sales of *Mein Kampf* abroad. In any case, the accumulation, in the course of a few years, of more than two million pounds, mainly at the expense of his subjects, was no mean secondary result of his political activities, and it was a remarkable sign of a robust conscience, and also of Hitler's awareness of the naivety of his average fellow-countrymen, that he should boastfully announce his magnanimous decision to "forgo his salary as Chancellor."

For all this, the faith of the people in Hitler's "personal integrity" was general. The grotesque combination of politics and private business, which would have been regarded as a major scandal in a democratic country, was regarded apparently as a matter of course in Nazi Germany. Strangely enough, however, many Germans were convinced also — although they believed Hitler to be almighty and omniscient—that he knew little of the utter corruptness and the sordid practices of his nearest colleagues and closest friends; yet such ignorance of their conduct would be almost impossible. For these people were never at much pains to conceal their new wealth, and they sometimes quarrelled quite openly over their booty. When Goering e.g., not long before the war, showed his castle, furnished with extravagant luxury, to a foreign diplomatist, he asked the latter, easily: "Hasn't it been worth while?" The venality and the blackmailing proclivities of the Nazi dignitaries, the fact that anything could be obtained by the bribing of party officials, and the gigantic taxation frauds and currency-smuggling transactions of prominent Nazis,<sup>2</sup> were a public

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 104, 136, 256.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 165.

secret in pre-war Germany. When it was seen that these people, of whom it was well known that they had formerly owned nothing but debts, and that their creditors had often distrained upon their goods—as e.g., in the case of Goering, with his many tavern scores—had suddenly become possessed of enormous fortunes, and were living in castles and manor-houses, it was hardly necessary to ask how this wealth was acquired. It could not come from their salaries, which did not even suffice to cover the most ordinary luxuries. Everybody knew that this wealth came from the sums embezzled from those who had been imprisoned and liquidated since 1933. It is notorious that the bloodthirsty Jew-baiter Streicher, Hitler's nearest personal friend, stole a great part of the "Jewish contribution" collected in Nuremberg, while Goebbels, on his own account, forced the Jewish communities to levy a "voluntary" tribute.<sup>1</sup> It must be left to the imagination of the reader to estimate how much of the money blackmailed from "enemies of the State" by all the ingenious methods of expropriation never reached the Treasury, but trickled into the capacious pockets of the Nazi robbers. It can hardly have been a sheer accident that Goebbels owned the former residence of a Jew at Schwanenwerder, near Berlin; Ribbentrop a magnificent castle near Salzburg, whose original owner died in a concentration camp; and Baldur von Schirach a famous manor house, with a similar history, near Vienna; or that all the great expropriated newspapers—rather lucrative properties, despite the competition of the Leader's *Völkischer Beobachter*—were suddenly in the hands of Goering, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Himmler and other Nazi chiefs. There are people enough in Germany who know the details of the many cases in which, on the occasion of the "transference of the property of enemies of the State into the reliable hands" of Nazi bosses, stronger means were applied than mere confiscation. Murder in a concentration camp was the usual method when anyone tried to oppose the robbery. Again, it goes without saying that the numerous assistants and relatives of the leading gangsters understood how to exploit their knowledge in order to feather their own smaller nests. The case of the mother of the Nazi Chief Constable of Berlin, Count Helldorf,<sup>2</sup> who for years had made a speciality of accepting great sums of money from relatives and friends of Jews imprisoned under the aegis of her son, for "intervening" on behalf of the prisoners, shows the grotesque corruption of the system in its full beauty.

The peculiar economic ethics of the Nazi bosses were grafted on to the business mentality of the average German merchant, which

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 243 (note 3)

had not been of an exalted type before. In Imperial Germany, the army officers, the high officialdom, and great land-owners had constituted the leading classes of society, and notwithstanding the prevailing highly capitalistic system these privileged castes continued for a long time to regard with a certain disdain even the biggest and wealthiest so-called "shopkeeper." Up to the end of the 19th century even the most successful business men were not fully accepted by society apart from a few exceptions, more especially in the great seaports. The author still remembers what a sensation was caused when Wilhelm II for the first time ran counter to tradition by appointing an untitled manufacturer, Moller, as Minister of Commerce,<sup>1</sup> and how silly jokes were circulated about the social manners of this man.

Prejudice among "society" people and lack of tradition may have contributed to the fact that the wealthy German business man rarely divested himself of a certain snobbishness, or of the other unpleasing characteristics of the parvenu. Sometimes an inferiority complex may have been evoked by the attitude of society and have given rise to a feeling that it was hardly worth while to be better than one's social reputation. At all events, in spite of the enormous economic development of Imperial Germany, the acquisition of colonies, the creation of a great mercantile marine, the increasing political influence of the big industrialists, merchants, and bankers among the ruling classes, and the gradual acceptance of some arrivés even by the most exclusive society—for all this, both the social status and the business ethics of the average German commercial class were not equal to those generally obtaining in the great trading countries. The German export merchants were notorious for their unfair methods of elbowing out and dumping, and the business methods inside Germany were certainly no better, and were often enough conspicuous for their deplorable lack of honesty. Even among merchants in a fair way of business there was not the respect for the given word to which we are accustomed in this country. A trifling episode may illustrate this: One day, long before Hitler, a German banker famous for his scepticism explained to the writer in a fashionable Berlin restaurant, discreetly pointing at a gentleman with a loud voice and a broad Saxon accent, that he had recently converted this man's business—an enterprise of some importance—into a company. All the documents had been signed and the customary lunch had been eaten when a telegram arrived which laconically stated: "Impossible to form company." The request for an explanation elicited the reply that, having reconsidered the matter, they relied on Saxon custom, which allowed one to change one's mind within three days.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p 62



Of course, no such customary law existed. But the impudent speculation on the banker's probable reluctance to take proceedings was justified.

The Great War, the post-war period and, in particular, the inflation led to an extraordinary deterioration of commercial ethics in Germany, and a deplorable rapacity began to show itself, especially among the big manufacturers. These gentlemen, who, during the period of inflation, had acquired ample experience of how one's property could be augmented in time of national emergency,<sup>1</sup> joined the Nazi upstarts in exploiting the "Aryanisation" of Germany and in the effort to protect, in good time, their wealth against depreciation and other possible contingencies. The common interests and the robust egoism of both partners made this co-operation of the captains of industry and the Nazi bosses an extremely happy and durable alliance. The combined in wholesale frauds upon the Treasury by evading the payment of taxes, and at one time it was notorious in Berlin that certain well-known tax collectors had been suddenly removed, having over-zealously discovered some of the highest Nazi bosses among the culprits of a gigantic tax scandal. German export merchants, during the great "dumping" period, which was inaugurated under the auspices of Dr. Schacht, did not confine themselves to making false statements to foreign authorities; they also cheated habitually their own country, conspired with corrupt officials, in order to obtain still higher export allowances, and evaded the delivery to the State of the due proportion of the foreign currency in which payments were made. Fantastic profits were shared between the Nazi chiefs and the industrial and financial magnates in the time of "autarky," when in the course of the "concentration of industry" the greatest German industrial concerns were transformed into the "Hermann Göring Works," and similar big associations; and, finally, when the banks and industries of the conquered countries were taken over.<sup>2</sup> The statute imposing the death penalty on those guilty of exporting money or valuables, etc., did not, of course, apply to the transactions of the ruling clique, and the crimes jointly committed in the economic field, as in so many other walks of life, make it clear what sort of "iron band" it was that, according to one of their bombastic statements, should "hold the leading men of Nazi Germany together in life and death."

Such was the atmosphere in which the pretended "resurrection" of Germany's economic and social structure took place, and it may now be more clearly realised why we had to dwell upon the origin and rise

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 35-37

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 191-192, 295, 308.

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of the Nazi leaders and their prosperous marriage with the captains of industry and trade. It will presently appear how the sinister spirit radiating from the leading circles gradually poisoned the business morals of the other strata. It is indeed indispensable fully to grasp this atmosphere, in order to understand the social and economic developments during the Nazi period. The peculiar combination of the ruthless egoism of the ruling gang, unhampered by any moral scruples, with the semi-scientific theories of economic and sociological quacks, like Daitz,<sup>1</sup> Darré and Funk,<sup>2</sup> and the ambitious "intuitions" of a megalomaniac leader, must constantly be kept in mind when we proceed to consider the activities of the Nazis in this field, and to compare their manifestos with their deeds. Only to those who had not a clear notion of this unclean and contemptible milieu might it seem rash when we declared that there was never a solid economic plan, and no real social conviction whatsoever behind the medley of dilettante and opportunistic measures. It was because of this absolute emptiness, and in order to conceal the real aim of aggression and robbery, that at the time of the seizure of power, the inconvenient enquirer for a precise programme was snubbed in the Reichstag by Hitler's significant answer, that his "plans would appear as soon as he began to rule."

The Nazis, acting on the principle that first things should be done first, regarded it as their primary task to ensure that no one should ever be able to overthrow them. They would not repeat the stupid mistake of the Republic of Weimar, which was eventually defeated by the united powers of the old officials, the capitalists, and the Nazis themselves. Thus they had to destroy, above all, every possible centre of resistance and to consolidate all powers in their own hands. Three main potential centres of resistance were in question in the economic field. Firstly, the Labour Movement, to whose destruction we shall return in due course. Secondly, the representatives of capitalism, who, in spite of their willing co-operation, had still to be brought under full control, in order to prevent them from becoming dangerous again. (We shall see, presently, how this was done.) Thirdly, there was the vast field of private undertakings which, in so far as they were not already owned by Nazis, had now to be transferred into "reliable hands."

Nothing, perhaps, could be more instructive as to the nature of the Nazi mind than a glance at the system of political pressure by which the Nazis managed to insinuate themselves into the economic fabric. This feat was achieved by organising the whole

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 194.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 181.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 65-66.

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economy of the country on party lines, in a manner similar to the pattern of the Fascist "cooperative corporations." Every branch of industry and trade, beginning with the bankers and steel manufacturers, and not forgetting the tailors, greengrocers, and cobblers, was formed into a political-economic unit ("Wirtschaftsgruppe") under a Nazi leader. The influence of these units—as regards tenders and public orders, the allocation of all the rationed raw materials, and the distribution of labour—and the power of the unit leaders to interfere with the internal affairs of every individual firm<sup>1</sup> made the "party" virtually the master of the whole economic life of the country. A secondary result, however, was the extension of the confusion of politics and economics, and the corruption already prevailing in the leading circles, to a middle-class mercantile world, and a further catastrophic decline in economic morality set in immediately. Needless to say, as in the public administration, so in all economic organisations also, the influential and well-paid posts were given to party bosses or their relatives. One of the most significant examples of this practice was the appointment of Goebbels' brother, till then an obscure clerk employed by a provincial insurance company, to the general managership of the United German Public Fire Insurance Corporations. But not all the directors and managers of private enterprises could be dismissed and replaced by aspiring Nazis quite so simply as this—at all events, for so long as an attempt was made to save appearances in the eyes of foreign countries. Nevertheless, there were ways enough of achieving the twofold purpose of gaining control over all enterprises of any importance, and satisfying deserving place-hunters and party members with directorships and managerial posts. The manner in which the "agreements," by virtue of which the new men entered upon their positions, were usually obtained, gives one an illuminating glimpse of the crafty gentlemen who represented the Nazi generation of German business men, and its commercial ethics. Here, too, one can trace the fundamental traits of the method afterwards applied in the "peaceful economic penetration" of the conquered countries and in the treatment of those neutral countries which "co-operated" with Germany under the New Order.<sup>2</sup>

There was, in 1933, a general feeling among German business men—a feeling strongly "supported" by the Nazis themselves—that it might be useful to adapt their enterprises as quickly as possible to the new system. They called this *Gleichschaltung*, and what it meant was the appointment of "reliable" Nazis as partners,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 169-170

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 122-123, 213-215.

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co-directors or managers. Of course, these gentlemen brought no capital into the firm, but they had letters of introduction from the highest Nazi bosses or recommendations from the Nazi organisations, and, often enough, they themselves held high positions in the Party. Sometimes these intruders proved a real "success," and the new arrangement worked smoothly from the very first. For although, as a rule, the newcomers understood nothing of the business, they had one invaluable advantage: they had "connections" in the proper quarters. Thus, when the "mentalities" of the old and the new partners were mutually attuned, a happy and harmonious companionship in corruption was quickly established. Sometimes, however, matters took another course; namely, when after the honeymoon the real character of the new man became apparent; when, presuming upon his high position in the Party, he made excessive claims, or demanded enormous cash advances; and often enough it was learnt, too late, that not only was he insolvent, but had a reputation into which the old partners, in their eagerness to engage a gentleman so highly recommended by the Party, had unfortunately failed to enquire. Relying on his intimate relations with the highest Party dignitaries, he could refer, incidentally, to the fact that many of these gentlemen had formerly had similar "little misfortunes;" and, at any rate, everything that had happened before the Nazi revolution must be regarded merely as a consequence of the "disgraceful conditions of the old system." To get rid of such a sinister colleague was often impossible, and always an expensive business. Indeed, the complainant could congratulate himself if the man did not turn the tables on him, and, by bringing a deliberately invented charge, make himself sole head of the firm. In many cases the frightened owners decided to take refuge in "voluntary" retirement, and to leave the business to the Nazi parasite. But even this was not so easily done; for the co-operation between the Nazis was extremely close. Suddenly the "Trustee of Labour" would intervene, forbidding the former owner, "in the interest of the workmen and employees," to close down the business, or even to retire, because he would thereby "deprive his successor of the necessary working capital." The author knows of various cases in which despairing owners abandoned their business, together with all the money invested in it, in favour of the gentlemen with the "good connections," only too happy to have escaped imprisonment in a concentration camp for "anti-social conduct" and "unfounded and insulting charges against a deserving Party member."

True, if both the parties involved were "influential" enough there

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 171.

were still other methods of settling a dispute. Differences with a former owner who was unable to adapt himself fully to the "new spirit of modern Nazi economy," but who could not simply be turned out of doors because of his own "connections," were solved to the satisfaction of all parties when a public or — often under pressure — a private bank advanced to the "reliable Party member" the necessary money to buy out the former principal and to carry on the business. Both the ordinary principles of security and the Party slogan of "slavery to interest on capital" were then irrelevant, and it did not matter in such "special cases" that the business should have become completely dependent on money borrowed from the bank. Sometimes the parties showed their gratitude to the bank manager by a handsome bribe; or bank managers, often inexperienced and themselves owing their positions to political nepotism, acted on the opportunist maxim that the high connections of the new customer were the best guarantee.

Less "scrupulous" methods could be applied, of course, when it emerged that a man of whom his Nazi partner wanted to rid himself had something in his past that could be used against him—e.g., the fact that he was a former Freemason or Democrat, or that his wife was of Jewish extraction, to say nothing of the still harsher means which were used against Jewish merchants even before 1938. In such cases a systematic "war of nerves" was carried out by the authorities, who conspired with the Nazi aspirants in order to "rescue businesses by taking them out of unreliable hands," as the Chief Trustee of Labour in Berlin once euphemistically expressed it in the presence of the writer. One day an important public contract was not renewed. The Nazi partner set out to make enquiries, returned with a frown, and informed his senior partner that, in spite of his first-class connections, he could not ascertain the actual reason for the non-renewal. Perhaps Herr X could recollect some little blot on his political past? Then a public authority failed to accept the firm's tender, although it was the lowest. This time the Nazi returned from making enquiries with an even deeper frown. He told his partner, with profound regret, that although he had eventually succeeded in obtaining an explanation, he was bound by his word as a Party member not to disclose it; but he had to admit that it was a serious political matter; he was very sorry, indeed, that Herr X had not warned him earlier of his objectionable past, this all the more as he had declined another, favourable offer before entering Herr X's firm. If such pressure as this was not enough to make the senior partner capitulate, then there was trouble about the allocation of rationed raw materials, or

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something else. Only a very strong character could resist the incessant strain of the deliberate chicanery directed against a business which was gradually losing ground, and continue to carry on with a partner whose deceitful treachery became more and more intolerable. This gentleman would have his Nazi accomplices among the workmen and employees, by whom baseless, anonymous complaints and accusations were made to the "Labour Front." Harassing enquiries followed, and if the victim still held out, the "Labour Trustee," that peculiar product of National "Socialism" whose position will presently be considered in brief, appointed a "Special Trustee" to restore the so-called *Arbeitsfrieden* (peace of labour) in the factory. The Special Trustee appointed was, of course, the Nazi partner, and it rarely happened that the former proprietor of the business refused to accept eventually the logic of the facts.

In concluding this preliminary survey of the ethical milieu, the methods, and the general spirit of the penetration of Germany's economy by the advancing Nazis, we may sum up by saying that, after years of such monstrous corruption and the general commingling of politics with private business, German economic ethics were reduced to zero; a statement which will be confirmed by further observations in the course of our enquiry. As mentioned before—one had merely to invert the official Nazi slogan,<sup>1</sup> "Common Interest prevails over Private Profit," in order to understand its true meaning. The normal experience, however, that dishonesty does not long continue to prosper, could not be valid in a totally State-controlled economy, in which everything depended upon the "co-operation" between bribable officials and bribing but "politically reliable" business men. Temporarily, the system not only worked, but it brought about an extremely solid and apparently insoluble conglomeration of industrialists, merchants, and officials, all of whom were conscious that they and their magnificent mutual insurance company were dependent on the continuance of the Nazi régime.<sup>2</sup>

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Let us now turn briefly to the second important device by which the Nazis made themselves the masters of the national economy—the destruction of the Labour Movement.

The most dangerous of all the opponents of National Socialism were, of course, the Labour Organisations and their Trade Unions. This vast reservoir of comparatively peaceful and reasonable work-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 9, 51, 57, 87, 94, 101, 139, 195

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 165, 276-277.

men and employees was completely destroyed in 1933: the officials were imprisoned, the accumulated funds—including those of the mutual benefit societies, the co-operatives, and their great financial centre, the *Deutsche Arbeiterbank*—were confiscated. The *Ersatz* was the so-called common *Arbeitsfront*, of employers and employees, with Dr. Ley at the top, and with an affiliated organisation of Nazi-appointed “mediators” and provincial and local “Labour Trustees” (*Treuhänder der Arbeit*). We do not propose to dwell upon the social inconsistency and the inherent economic defects of a common organisation of employers and employees, with its inevitable result—in normal conditions—of raising, instead of reducing, prices, and restricting, instead of encouraging, production, both to the disadvantage of the consumers. Such effects did not trouble the Nazis in their State-directed economy, attuned exclusively to the preparation for war. But it goes without saying that, despite the name *Nationalsozialismus*, the forcible “welding together” of employers and employees in the Nazi variety of a “Common Labour Front,” with the outspoken “anti-Marxist” purpose of making every strike illegal and putting all the economic power of the country at the disposal of the Nazi Party and its Leader, had no similarity whatever with genuine Socialism, and meant, in fact, the end of the whole German Labour Movement. Thus it seemed almost incredible that, after all their previous denunciations of “Judaean-Marxism,” Nazi speakers, in 1939, during the short intermezzo of the pact with Russia, could declare, in order to soothe the bewildered German workers, that, while the conflict between Nazism and Communism remained unaltered, “no fundamental ideological differences existed between Nazism and Socialism, as explained in Marx’s *Capital*. The fact that such profound nonsense could be offered to an audience of German workmen was evidence, not only of the boundless impertinence of the Nazi propaganda, and its customary utter distortion of the truth, but also of the effect which six years of Nazi instruction had exercised upon the intellectual powers of the German workers.

This must be kept in mind when plans for reconstruction come up for discussion; and it must also be remembered that the independent spirit of German Labour, though it seemed to be evolving under the Weimar Republic, has never been supported by a solid tradition. The experience of the inglorious attitude of the German delegates to the International Labour Conference held at Stockholm, during the Great War, was confirmed, and even surpassed, by the behaviour of the German workers after 1933. The “successful” liquidation by Hitler’s “strong hand” of all the social achievements won by the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 183.

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German Trade Unions by years of effort made a deep impression on many members of the working class, despite the resulting hardships, and such frivolous allurements, disguised as "social reforms," as the mass transport of some thousands of privileged "Strength through Joy" travellers to Madeira, appealed strongly to their naive vanity. Indeed, it would be a mistake to overlook the fact that the purpose of the Nazis, to destroy, together with their institutions, the independent spirit of German Labour, and, in particular, their sense of international collaboration, by way of filling them with an inflated "racial" pride, has met with very considerable success. Such a thing, e.g., as the forcible importation of millions of foreign slave-labourers who for a long time under the worst social conditions had to toil in German factories, would have been unthinkable had there been any serious opposition on the part of the German working-class.

To illustrate this, we will quote an earlier public statement of a Nazi district leader, defining the position of the foreign workers: "The German workman is not the colleague of the foreign worker. The German worker has a right to a better job, even if the foreigner is better qualified. No foreigner can be allowed to supervise German workers. Any contact with the foreign labourers, except during the hours of work, is strictly forbidden. A German who maintains friendly relations with foreigners will be publicly reprimanded. No foreman is permitted to invite a foreign worker to his home, or to sit with him at table . . ." The statement, of course, referred to "volunteers," and we refrain from discussing in this context the indescribable conditions under which Russian and Polish deportees and war prisoners had to toil, for since the liberation of the foreign working slaves these things have become common knowledge. It was no exaggeration when President Roosevelt called Berlin a great slave market; and it matters very little that with the deteriorating war situation the tone was gradually lowered, and improved conditions promised, if the foreign workers would "loyally join in the fight of Europe against Bolshevism." Indeed, a vast propaganda action combined with a recruiting drive for a White Russian anti-Soviet army was eventually started among the Russian working slaves and war prisoners, under the leadership of the notorious former Tsarist Cossack general Vlassov, whom only a little while before Himmler had called a "swine." One may doubt which was more significant of the Nazi mentality, the abominable maltreatment and the unequivocal declaration of the inferiority of the foreign slaves, during the triumphal period, or these cunning "concessions" which were supported by the opportunist gambols of the



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racial theorists already mentioned in another context.<sup>1</sup> Anyhow, the German workers submitted indifferently and obediently to all these evil things. One should contrast their complete subservience with the steadfastness shown, for instance, in the general strike of the Dutch railwaymen, and with the example set by the workmen in many of the enslaved countries — and even in some parts of Italy — who, in certainly no less dangerous conditions, energetically resisted their Fascist or “collaborationist” governments. Such a comparison may help us also to form a clearer judgment as to what resolute collective resistance might have achieved in Germany, especially before the “seizure of power,” in 1933, and during the earlier period of the Nazi régime, when the rule of the Gestapo was not yet firmly established.

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The destruction of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement was the fulfilment of an early promise given to the “captains of industry” when, in their eagerness to destroy the social achievements of the Weimar Republic, they agreed to become the foster-fathers of Nazism. The never-dissolved alliance between Hitler’s “anti-capitalistic” gang and the exponents of extreme capitalism constitutes, together with the gigantic swindle of the “Common Labour Front,” convincing proof of the emptiness of all the bombastic talk of a “new German anti-Capitalism” as opposed to the stridently denounced “Plutocratism” of the democracies. On the other hand, the much-lauded “modern combination of public and private enterprise” of the Nazi variety, as exemplified by the “Hermann Goering Works,” was, of course, anything but an approach to State Socialism, as some simpletons had believed it to be; and the revival by the Nazis of the hypocritical claim of the Ministers of a highly capitalistic Imperial Germany, that the railways were “nationalised,” is another proof of the falsity of all such pretensions. The reason why even in Imperial Germany the railways were placed under State management was that State control made it easier to exclude “unreliable”—that is, socialistic—workmen from enterprises of such great military importance; and the immediate dissolution by the Nazis of the unions of railway employees which had been permitted under the Weimar Republic, and their denial to the railwaymen even of those small liberties which were enjoyed by other workers, shows exactly the same tendency, and indicates the real meaning of this peculiar “socialisation.”

Indeed, nothing more effective than window-dressing has ever been accomplished by the Nazis by way of mitigating the existing

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 96-98

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social and economic contrasts, or in restraint of capitalism. All that they have actually done confirms our assertion that their planning was not supported by any clear-cut social principle. They first reduced the daily working hours of men and forbade all female and child labour, and then, in 1937, faced with the increasing shortage of labour, they called up the women and children for factory work. Their treatment of the problem of the small tradesman is another striking example of opportunism. In 1933 Nazi propaganda denounced both big Department Stores and "Marxist Co-operatives," and demanded the "revival of a sound middle-class of independent tradesmen." A few years later, still in peace-time, nearly 800,000 small traders were gradually liquidated, and it was suddenly discovered that "the artificial preservation of small businesses was a waste of labour and wealth, unworthy of a great and rising people." Before long, however, this policy was again reversed, at least theoretically, and the necessity to restore the small industries after the war once more proclaimed. In fact, all the ever-changing measures which were pseudo-scientifically camouflaged as "social and economic reforms" were subsidiary to the one predominant idea of concentrating, step by step, the economic powers of the country in the hands of the Leader. The so-called "crusade of anti-capitalism" exhausted itself in transferring the wealth of the dispossessed opponents of Nazism, of the "Jews and enemies of the State," into the hands of Nazi bosses, who themselves rapidly developed from "have-nots" into capitalists. The same drive which delivered the great industrialists from their nightmare of organised labour laid upon them in exchange another and mightier incubus—the Nazi State, or, more exactly, the Nazi Party. Through the medium of the "Common Labour Front," the "Leader" could play on the instrument of Labour as he pleased; and he obtained a control of production such as had never been known in modern times anywhere in the world. After the Nazi penetration into private enterprise and the appointment of "reliables" to all posts of any importance, the whole economic machinery of the country, with its managers and workmen, was ultimately subject to, and directed by, the methods of party discipline.

Our principal purpose at this stage is to show how from the very beginning the concentrated economic powers of the Nazi State were deliberately and recklessly employed in the preparation for war. For the moment then we shall confine ourselves to the aforesaid exposition of the untruthfulness of the Nazi claim that their activities had been in any way related to genuine socialism or anti-capitalism. At a later stage it will appear that the assertion sometimes heard, that

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Nazism signified "a combination of chauvinism and private capitalism," was hardly more correct. The Pan-Germanism of the Imperial Reich had indeed this combination as basis, while Hitler's alliance with the captains of industry was merely a product of temporary expediency, equally opportunistic as regards both parties. Probably some nebulous notions of a kind of Neo-Feudalism were hatching in the Leader's brain as his social and economic "ideal" of the future.<sup>1</sup> This, however, and the true meaning of the talk of the allegedly insurmountable antagonism between Nazism and "Bolshevist Communism," will appear more clearly when we have examined the use which the Nazis actually made of the powers consolidated in their hands.

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Hitler had promised the social and economic "renaissance" of Germany. Praise was lavished on him in advance by the fanaticised German people, and, oddly enough, also by many naive foreign observers. Looking merely at the surface of life in Germany, they thought they saw an economic resurrection which did not in fact exist. Certainly, since all the non-Nazi organisations were smashed and trampled underfoot, and the Press completely Nazified, there were no longer any strikes, and no hostile political demonstrations<sup>2</sup> disturbed the "national unity." The number of unemployed fell rapidly—as well it might when millions of men were turned into soldiers, while millions more were employed on public works, and hundreds of thousands of new jobs were artificially created by expelling the "enemies of the people" from their positions and excluding them from the statistics of the unemployed. More sceptical observers in the years before the war could not, for all this, bring themselves to believe in Hitler's "ingenious solution," which other peoples, no less hard pressed by the evil of unemployment, had simply not happened to discover. How was the "revival" to be maintained by the Germans, isolated as they were economically and spiritually from, and mistrusted by, the greater part of the world; by a people which had not only been compelled, quite recently, to apply to its foreign creditors for a moratorium, but had also passed through a great internal financial crisis?<sup>3</sup> These sceptics were by no means satisfied with the bombastic assertions of the Nazi economists that the immense increase of the internal debt "temporarily" necessitated by the new methods was innocuous, and that strict "autarky" would eventually result in an equal balance of trade.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 184-185

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 46, 132, 171.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 34-39.

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Now, in the retrospect, and since wider circles have acquired a better notion of the complex problem of unemployment, it will be more readily understood that Hitler's "unique" solution was not attractive to the experts of other countries. The mystery of its "success" in Germany was elucidated when the work on which the German millions were employed was clearly seen. It meant by no means a fundamentally new "public-works policy" covering the whole range of public activity, housing, and development of all kinds. It was neither productive, nor was it such as to raise the national standard of life. The whole programme was centred upon the newly-created army, and the masses were employed almost exclusively on the building of a vast war-machine. The new pre-military "Labour Service," which was in fact a military pioneer corps, together with the hundreds of thousands of the so-called "Todt Organisation," had to build numberless airfields, gigantic fortifications, and the famous motor-roads, which were of no economic but merely of strategical value.

The new army was not only rapidly expanding itself, by virtue of its own "dynamic force"; it was also absorbing labour in geometrical progression. Every increase at one place demanded more increases at another—new special troops, new barracks, new war machines, new armament and munitions works, new fortifications on all frontiers, new aeroplanes and aerodromes, new warships and auxiliary craft, new harbours and dockyards, new motor-roads and military railways. It was this ever-increasing, unproductive activity which the superficial observers in and outside Germany regarded as "the awakening of a new economic life," and an admirable achievement of Hitler's. Some sceptics asked themselves whether it was possible that Hitler's economic advisers had entirely forgotten that in building up this huge apparatus the rest of Germany's wealth was being squandered, and that, in violation of all previous promises given to the Germans, the external debts were continually and rapidly increasing with the growing imports of raw materials for rearmament purposes; moreover, that this proud war machine, once built up, had to be maintained, modernised, repaired, and refuelled day by day at immense cost, while the millions of workers must become workless again when the process of rearmament was completed. Those, however, who had studied *Mein Kampf* did not believe that all this had simply escaped Hitler's attention. It was only too clear that the fanatic, in the full knowledge that Germany could not bear the burden for long, had nevertheless undertaken at any cost to pile up her armaments to such a height that he would be able to shatter, one at a time, first the neighbouring States, then Europe, and

then the world. Hitler's opponents in Germany tried, early enough, although in vain, to urge this notion upon their friends abroad. Those who could not then bring themselves to believe that war was planned from the very beginning, and that Hitler was preparing with terrible thoroughness every stage of the scheme, must admit, at any rate, that events unfolded with iron consequence, in accordance with the predictions of those with clearer sight.

In order to make Germany "independent," the agriculturalists were ordered to intensify production to the utmost. After 1936 all the larger farmers were urged to erect, with fiscal assistance, capacious granaries on their estates, in case of emergency. Textile crops for the production of substitute fibres had to be grown on a large scale. Mines were reopened that had formerly been abandoned as unremunerative. Enormous new foundries for the exploitation of inferior ores were built in the remotest districts, for which new transport facilities had first to be created; and immense new industrial works with specially designed machines were erected for the production of synthetic rubber, benzine, and many other kinds of *Ersatz*. In short, the Germans did for six pre-war years all that this country was forced to do on the outbreak of war. The purpose was all the more obvious since, as from 1934 onwards, not only had every factory to be equipped with an air-raid shelter, but every owner of a block of flats or dwelling-house had to prepare a *Luftschutzkeller*, while black-out exercises were organised in the remotest villages. No wonder that, even in peace time, an acute shortage of labour suddenly replaced the former unemployment, and we have already indicated<sup>1</sup> how the rapid change of the labour market, which the Nazi experts had not foreseen, was met by the abrupt and ruthless abandonment of principles which, not long before, had been praised as the highest social wisdom..

More and more everything that allegedly had been undertaken to overcome the plague of unemployment, or in furtherance of social welfare, revealed itself as part of a gigantic programme to convert the whole of Germany into a huge war machine. The famous boats of the "Strength through Joy" cruises were troop-carriers. Hitler's ostensible hobby, the grandiose factory for producing the "People's Car" at Fallersleben, which was erected with the help of instalments elicited by misrepresentation from the workers, was, in fact, a secret tank factory. We shall now better understand why the German newspapers sneered at the "governess mentality" of *The Times* and other "uninvited advisers from abroad," and why the Nazis were so extremely unwilling to be "dogmatically" warned by well-meaning

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 174

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foreign economists, who still believed in Hitler's peaceable intentions, that the mass-production of inferior substitutes, etc., must inevitably prove an enormous blunder, and all the huge investments for such purposes were bound to become valueless on the very day when Germany had to abandon her "autarkic" isolation and re-enter the world economy

The whole apparent craze of autarky takes on its proper aspect as soon as we accept the view that the German rulers had no intention of perpetuating this kind of economy, that all the talk of building up an "independent peace economy," which so impressed the simple-minded admirers of Germany's "resurrection," was only a means of concealing the real purpose of the Nazis—to prepare themselves for the "Blitzkrieg." Looking at matters from this point of view, it is perfectly clear why all the proposals of the U.S.A. and Great Britain for solving Germany's difficulties by making the world markets freely accessible to her, if only she would agree to a reasonable policy of international disarmament, and renounce her policy of autarky, were coolly declined. The Nazis wanted something else than "economic alleviations." There is plenty of further evidence that they were completely indifferent as regards their undermining of Germany's peace economy, and that they had made up their minds to recover, directly their armaments were complete, all that they "needed"<sup>1</sup> from the "Have-States" by means of aggression.

Here are some other significant facts which at that time attracted too little attention. In the summer of 1938, two banknotes, each of the same value, and with the same number, were paid in at a private bank in Berlin. Suspecting forgery, the banker submitted them to the Reichsbank, which declared that both notes were good. There was great astonishment among the employees of that bank, until they smilingly understood that the circulation of banknotes must be even greater than the fantastic amount which was officially admitted, and that, by the ingenious trick of duplicated numbers, the Reichsbank wanted to render certain estimates more difficult. If they were right—and the following example of the business methods of the Reichsbank shows this to be most probable—it was obviously labour lost henceforth to discuss any official German figures, an opinion which was strongly supported by the revelations, after the breakdown of Mussolini, concerning the Italian system of concealing the condition of the State finances; for particularly in the financial field the Fascist pattern has frequently been applied—and out-matched—by the Nazis.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 159 note.

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The following is an example, which came under the personal observation of the writer, of the tricks played by the Reichsbank, then still under the management of Schacht. When, three years before the war, it became increasingly difficult to meet the soaring cost of the armaments programme, the German authorities decided to force the manufacturers to accept payment in the form of bills of exchange. These bills, however, ought not to take the form of War Office acceptances. For these, if rediscounted, might have found their way to the Reichsbank, which was still to some extent under foreign control. Additional War Office Bills appearing in the official reports of the Reichsbank would not merely have revealed an inadmissible increase of the credit allotted to the Reich, but would also have aroused yet other suspicions. Accordingly, the authorities hit upon the following trick: the German Reich "founded," with the help of some dummy companies, the so-called *Metallurgische Forschungsgesellschaft* — MEFO (Company for Metallurgical Research). This company had to accept drafts on the army contractors for all their deliveries. "For the sake of simplicity" the contractors had to hand over at once to the MEFO twelve to eighteen drafts at a time for future renewal. The MEFO returned to the supplier the first draft duly accepted, the contractor discounted it at his bank, and received cash. The bank again could have the bill rediscounted through the Reichsbank, which, of course, had to finance the whole business, and, moreover, had to renew the credit twelve to eighteen times. Who else in Germany could raise the enormous sums in question? But by the "acceptance" of the MEFO the credit to the Reich was camouflaged as a normal "commercial bill of exchange presented with the endorsement of a private bank." The Reichsbank did not feel obliged to disclose, in its reports, the new advance virtually made to the Government; and thus it was not exposed to the risk of inconvenient questions from the foreign members of its board.

The thing was a plain swindle, for which a bank director in any other country might have been sentenced to penal servitude. The so-called "three months' bills" had to run, in fact, from three to five years; they were not commercial bills at all, but a credit to the State for the purchase of armaments, granted in contravention of the charter of the Reichsbank.

But even this was not the whole story. Among the contractors, large and small, who received "payment" in the bills of an unknown company, there were some who had misgivings—not only at signing bills for deliveries made to the *Reich*, but also at handing over to the MEFO large numbers of renewal drafts; all the more so as, in

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the case of recurrent deliveries, a small manufacturer thus became involved eventually in liabilities of millions of Reichsmarks. So then, to allay anxiety, a printed note was circulated which explained that in the future no one who endorsed a MEFO Bill of Exchange would be held responsible for it. This note—prudently unsigned, but issued by the Reichsbank — effectually dispelled all scruples, including those of the bankers who rediscounted with the Reichsbank the MEFO Bills which they received from their customers. But these “mercantile bills with three good signatures” recorded in the official reports of the Reichsbank as “first-class assets” and “cover” for the German currency, had henceforth the trifling defect that there was no debtor at all—except the dubious MEFO.

The case of the MEFO forms an extremely interesting example of the unscrupulous undermining of the German economy at its very heart, and this at a time—in 1936—when Hitler was still emphatically assuring the world of his peaceable intentions. In addition, it proves clearly that all partakers in the trick must have shared the conviction that the ultimate financial breakdown, otherwise inevitable as it was, would be made good in time by the anticipated war booty. Thus the president and the directors of the *Reichsbank* were, obviously, co-responsible for the preparation of the war, and the fact that the highest officials of Germany's Central Bank, who assuredly considered themselves as models of commercial integrity, were clearly unable to appreciate that their Hitlerism, or nationalism, or misled patriotism, could in no way excuse such fraudulent manipulations, throws a further spotlight on the mentality of the leading German economists. With this mentality it was not surprising that these gentlemen continued willingly to co-operate in the ever-worsening tricks of the economic policy of the Nazi government, whether these related to currency, or dumping, or extortions practised on prospective emigrants.<sup>1</sup>

However, at the end of 1938, that famous virtuoso of finance, Schacht, surprisingly managed to walk out—in itself no simple matter for a high official under Nazi rule. The true reasons for his disappearance from his post are obscure. But they certainly were not of the nature of moral scruples. This slippery turn-coat had not only been able to serve under democratic and reactionary governments alike, and eventually under the Nazis, but even found it possible to become a member of all these political parties in succession. He had lent a willing hand to the robbery of the Jews, and was more than anyone responsible for the vicious methods employed by the Reichsbank. But although he had skimmed the national

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 126



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wealth with increasing recklessness, and had gone to the utmost limits in his efforts to provide money for the Nazi Government, and to narrow the gap between Germany's international expenditure and revenue by a refined and highly objectionable system of secret premiums,<sup>1</sup> and all kinds of dumping—there still remained a vestige of at least an outward orthodoxy and reason in his measures. It would seem that he, who, if anyone did, understood Germany's economic position, had eventually lost the necessary confidence that things would really develop according to plan. The conjecture of those who knew him well, that by his resignation he had hoped to save himself for better times to come, and that he was cautiously preparing for a new change of his political colour, gained in all probability when he was arrested after the abortive putsch of his friend Dr Gerdeler<sup>1</sup> in 1944.

Schacht was still president of the board of directors when the Reichsbank managed to get rid of the last foreign members of its administration — another encroachment which was suffered in silence by the foreign powers. The last possibility of exercising from abroad a somewhat problematical control of German economy had thus vanished. After Schacht's departure all restraint in the public finance and economy was discarded. This was the time when, in 1939, after the successful Czechoslovakian adventure, the final preparations were made for the new great onslaught against Poland. These, and the cost of the new fortifications in the West and the increased air and naval programmes, grew to such dimensions that it was almost impossible to conceal the fact that a monetary or budgetary order based on reason and financial statutes could not be maintained any longer. Thus a new doctrine was bombastically pronounced by Hitler in collaboration with Schacht's successor, Funk. It stated that "the people's will and capacity to work was the best and only real cover of a national currency." It did not sound bad, and the expectation was justified that only a few would discover that the slogan was merely a distorted quotation from good old Adam Smith, who died in 1790.<sup>2</sup> Apart, however, from the fact that the "will and capacity" of the German people to work were engaged for years in the unproductive preparation for war, the dictum had little to do with Germany's financial calamities in a world where the exchange of goods was still dependent on tariffs, and on the international valuation of currencies. The new magical formula antici-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 243 (note 3).

<sup>2</sup>Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* "Labour, never varying in its own value, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. It is their real price, money is their nominal price only."

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pated an international economic world-order which had still to be created; and—in any case from the German point of view—it was obviously contradictory, since the principal aim of the German species of New Order was not to assure to the Germans of the fruits of their own labour, but to put other peoples to work for the benefit of the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

All this, however, mattered little to the Nazis, the main point being that the necessary “dogmatic foundation” was supplied which, according to a sacred Nazi principle, was indispensable and at the same time sufficient to make even the most opportunistic and inconsistent measures digestible by the German people. On the solid basis of the new theory decrees were issued—all this still in time of peace—which altogether abolished gold and foreign exchange as cover for the German currency, and empowered the government to “pay” its debts to contractors by issuing henceforth Treasury bills to an *unrestricted* amount, and, further, to take over all assets of the savings banks and insurance companies. Then came the last decisive step. the new Minister of Economy and President of the Reichsbank — both offices being now held by Funk — was given a free hand to carry out “all transactions which seemed to him useful in the interest of the State.” This laconic order made the Minister the independent master of the whole German economy. Not only could he create, by printing banknotes, or in any other way, as much “money” as he wanted; he was empowered also to undertake every conceivable form of interference with private property, including confiscation. The decree marked the final stage in the process of concentrating all economic powers in the hands of the Nazi Government. “Legally,” it meant clearly the end of economic individualism. In practice, however, it did not make an immediate end even of capitalism, though it involved the delivery of the capitalists to the mercy of the Nazi Government.

Here we touch the bottom of the Nazi conception of economics. Their principal dogma, as we have seen, subordinated not only the single citizen with all his possessions, but the interests of the whole population to the “independent, higher ends” of the totalitarian State as such, i.e., to the Pan-German ideal.<sup>2</sup> The question how this supreme aim could best be realised, formed also in the economic field the test of every single measure. It was from this starting point that the *Fuhrer* would decide whether, and how long, a more or less capitalistic system was to be maintained—with the means of production in the “strong and reliable hands of National-Socialist owners”

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 194-196.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 48-54, 84-85.

—or whether any other economic method would better serve the ultimate purpose. In other words, the whole question of the economic system was only of secondary importance in the opinion of the Nazis. Here appears clearly the sharp, twofold contrast between the totalitarian standpoint and the basic democratic and socialist principle—that by self-determination of the people the highest possible living standard of the greatest number of individuals must be achieved. But the totalitarian starting-point also makes it plain that the “abyss” between Nazism and certain forms of Communism was far less deep, however emphatically the existence of any points of contact has been constantly denied on both sides. It is too often overlooked by those who are still under the impression of orthodox theories and obsolete conceptions that “Communism” has gradually become a very wide, collective notion, which now comprises many intermediate stages—from an extreme, and often perfectly cosmopolitan, syndicalism to such a closely centralised and strongly national-minded variety as has been established in modern Russia. If one compares, for instance, the Nazi institution of a common *Arbeitsfront* of employers and employees with the directly antithetic principle embodied in the socialist Trade Unions, and, on the other hand, with the State-controlled Labour Organisation in Russia, the much smaller divergence in the latter case is striking. Apart from this, the *Fuhrer's* attitude during the intermezzo of the Russo-German treaty proved that the “struggle against Communism,” by which German and foreign capitalists and philistines alike had been deluded, had never been an article of faith with Hitler, but merely a question of expediency. Indeed, at a still earlier time a plan to introduce some kind of collective ownership of land and implements of production had been seriously considered by leading Nazi experts

When, early enough, the opinion had been voiced by some observers that the systematic robbing of the Jews must be regarded as a warning of the Nazi attitude as regards the whole principle of private property, it was briefly dismissed by many who considered the expropriation of the Jews a mere excess of anti-Semitic fanaticism. But then came the infringements of private property in Czechoslovakia and the wholesale confiscations not only of land, factories, businesses, and other implements of production, but also of private dwelling houses and flats, including furniture and valuables in Poland and elsewhere. It was not alone the brutality of such measures and the savage contempt of the recognised rules of international law that mattered, it was again the significant indifference towards the principle of private ownership itself. It was impossible

to dismiss such things as exceptional occurrences. These confiscations were transactions in the grand style, which could never have been undertaken by people whose social and economic thinking was still governed by the dogma of private ownership. One may object that the stolen property was given again to private "owners"—to "returning" Germans, or to those who were newly settled in Poland; to Nazis rewarded for their "merits," or "reliable" German manufacturers and capitalists who would henceforth carry on the expropriated businesses. This is no argument. For the fundamental principle of inviolable private ownership having once been diluted, those holding their new "properties" without real title, merely by the grace of the ruler, could easily be expropriated again in the "national interest"—if, for any reason, they were no longer regarded as "reliable Nazis."

Seen against this background the surrender to the State of the whole economic fabric, initiated by the Funk decree — though not immediately put into regular practice as regards the property of the *Volksgenossen*—foreshadowed to all appearances an imminent far-reaching alteration of the social and economic system, an alteration which one might call, according to one's personal taste, nationalisation or feudalisation—though, assuredly, not socialism. "Feudalisation" came probably nearest to the truth, because a modernised feudalism would have been well adapted to the theory of "blood and soil,"<sup>1</sup> and also to Hitler's queer mentality and his bias toward mediaeval conceptions, as shown, e.g., in the creation of "Knighthood Schools" for the education of a German élite of the future. At all events, undigested plans of a completely "new" social and economic system, plans to be given definite form when the promised great victory was won, were obviously lurking in the Leader's brain. Already a tentative beginning had been made at introducing another kind of land tenure. The *Erbhofedikt* had revived a sort of hereditary fief of the peasants, "Political Soldiers" had been established since 1933 in a belt of fully armed Nazi settlements around Berlin, as for a long time the metropolis was regarded with some mistrust by the staunchest Nazis. The system of "Wehrdörfer" (armed villages of German soldier-peasants with Polish working slaves) which was created, during the first years of the war, along the Eastern boundaries of Germany, furnished an illustration on a larger scale. The spectres of the Middle Ages reappeared with Knight-Service, Free Tenure, and Bondage. But whatever kind of Neo-Feudalism or State-directed economy might have emerged, even-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 84

tually, as the new economic and social "ideal," it would have served to perpetuate a Fascist system in the hard grip of an almighty *Führer*, his satrap *Gauleiters*, and a new Nazi "aristocracy"; and it may safely be assumed that it would have proved rather inconvenient even to the former captains of industry and the other exponents of capitalism. However, for the time being, it was obviously thought to be undesirable to give too great umbrage to the capitalist supporters at home and abroad, or unnecessarily to arouse the anger of the Nazi upstarts by interfering with their successful efforts to enrich themselves—while the main thing, the concentration of all economic power in the hands of the Leader, was being achieved.

It was an amazing fact, which revealed once more the degree of complacency then still prevailing everywhere, but especially in the isolationist circles of the U.S.A., that even the decree abolishing the last "legal" protection of private property did not produce a greater sensation in foreign countries. In Germany, while a few capitalists began to feel uneasy and took refuge in flight, the majority of the exponents of wealth relied on their belief that they were and would be sacrosanct. The Nazi aristocracy, in particular, were convinced that whatever happened to the German economy they, at all events, would be the members of a new privileged class. The German philistine, however, submitted with characteristic lethargy to the fact that it was now entirely in the discretion of one man to decide what, if any, should be the future purchasing power of his savings; and that the last semblance of the economic independence of the individual had gone. Though the decree was merely a "legalisation" of powers which were in virtual existence already, it remains a remarkable feature of the German mentality that no reaction, not even a wave of depression, was reported by any observer, any more than when the last fundamentals of law had been officially abolished.<sup>1</sup>

Certain conclusions as to the coming developments could be derived from the economic conditions and the state of mind prevailing in Germany immediately before the war. For gradually the Nazis had manoeuvred themselves and the German people into a position, economic and spiritual, from which there was no retreat, even if Hitler himself had wanted to draw back. The transformation of Germany's economy into a gigantic war machine, though not yet complete at every point, had led eventually to a situation which was summed up on the Berlin Stock Exchange by the jest that Hitler's "Kampf" had become a "Krampf" (convulsion). The Minister of Economics and President of the Reichsbank might

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 118, 229-230

resort to the most ingenious financial trickery, but he could not maintain a war reserve in gold and foreign currency and, at the same time, use these assets for the payment for indispensable imports of raw materials. Exports fell off, owing to the diversion of industry from peace production, the call-up of men for the ever-growing army, and the waste of manpower on rearmament, etc. At the same time, the national temper was increasingly aroused by the propaganda for the liberation of the "brothers abroad" and for the acquisition of new "living space".<sup>1</sup> The excitement was still enhanced by the fact that, in spite of longer working hours and the labour of women and children, the standard of life was gradually sinking; and the enforced consumption of costly and inferior substitutes, recalling unpleasant memories, was causing dissatisfaction, notwithstanding the inspiring slogan of "guns instead of butter". There was a general desire to end the "period of transition" and enter the Garden of Eden—without much bloodshed, of course, as they had been promised. The man in the street readily swallowed all the nonsensical arguments of the Nazis, who compared the density of population in the British Commonwealth and other parts of the earth with the figure for "overcrowded Germany"—the Arctic wastes and the Australian deserts all being reckoned as fertile soil. The herd-instinct was aroused. Nobody in Germany wished to be reminded that—apart from the actual labour shortage caused by the perverted "autarkic" economy—even the former rate of unemployment had absolutely no connection with any lack of "space"; and that there was not any urgent need of additional soil, either for the purposes of agriculture, or forestry, or coal-mining; or of sites for factories or dwelling houses. In fact, it was not additional "space" that they wanted. The talk of racial superiority, and still more the lack, after the destruction of their trade unions, of all spiritual bonds between the German workers and their colleagues in the democratic countries, had made their souls accessible to the devilish idea that others were to be made to toil for the Germans, and that especially the "inferior" peoples in Eastern Europe were the born bondsmen of the German *Herrenvolk*. The general excitement on the one side, and the growing confusion of the German economy on the other, had eventually reached such dimensions that the first mouthfuls—Austria and Czechoslovakia—were, indeed, urgently "needed."<sup>2</sup> The German economists could no longer "afford" to sacrifice part of their scanty foreign currency for imports from countries whose minerals, gold, and productive power they felt

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 153-155.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p 139 note 1.

entitled to annex, by the right of the stronger; in addition, they would henceforth pocket the foreign currency which these peoples earned from others by their exports; and, finally, these annexations would open the gates of Eastern Europe

When the conquest of Czechoslovakia was sufficiently "consolidated," and the familiar signs appeared that the turn of Poland had come, some foreign statesmen and business men such as had ridiculed all warnings and joined the chorus of those who misinterpreted Hitler's war preparations as the admirable "economic resurrection" of Germany, began to make renewed last-minute attempts at appeasement. They accepted with incorrigible naivety the hypocritical excuse that Germany felt her "honour" attacked<sup>1</sup> and her security "threatened" by an incomparably weaker neighbour people. They were even prepared to recognise not only the annexation of the whole of Czechoslovakia but also a German right to new "living space" in Eastern Europe, and were unable to understand what the far more ambitious German "Drang nach Osten" really implied. But, quite apart from the short-sightedness and immorality of such views, it was far too late for Germany, in the existing state of affairs, to venture on the suggested "peace conference before the war." A peaceful solution, involving the re-inclusion of Germany in the world economy, with the financial assistance of the Great Powers, would have necessitated a previous expert examination of the whole German situation. This would have revealed to all the world, not only the immensity of the German rearmament, of which only a very few persons abroad then had any real conception, but also the threadbare nature of the German claim for expansion. A careful enquiry would have shown that what the Nazis had really brought about in their own country was an economic disaster of the first order; that their famous "new economic methods" had, in fact, put an end to a genuine, though slow and rather inconspicuous, recovery of the German economy, which had begun just before the Nazis "seized power" and turned everything topsy-turvy.<sup>2</sup> At a pre-war peace conference it would have become evident that the country was on the brink of bankruptcy, possessing printed paper instead of gold or foreign exchange, and, instead of productive factories, munition works and artificially supported plants for the production of substitutes, many of which would be useless and costly curiosities when a free international exchange of commodities and currency began again. The leading accomplices in the conspiracy of maladministration and corruption would have cut one another's throats as soon as an international conference had brought their splendid businesses to an end, liquidated the senseless

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 150-155

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 37-40

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over-organisation, and reinstalled a reasonable peace economy. Like every robber, blackmailer and shuffler, Germany dreaded an impartial and expert discussion of her affairs. The gigantic witches' cauldron simply must not be uncovered. Since the German claims were devoid of any sound and moral foundation, they had to be realised by threats and violence. In order to avoid the forced exposure of her sinister secrets, and the irrevocable disgrace of the whole Nazi régime, Germany had first to be "restored to health" by accomplishing the organised great coup against the East. Once the Germans had Poland, with its rich mineral and industrial districts in Upper Silesia, its cornfields, and its oil-wells in Galicia, they could judge whether it would be more profitable, supported by this increase of power, to make further blackmailing claims at a future peace conference, or to carry on the business of conquest. Moreover, a private conversation with a British Minister, in which he had mentioned the amount of a possible loan to Germany, had made it clear that the foreign adherents to a policy of appeasement had no real conception of, and certainly would have shrunk from, the astronomical sums which, after six years of indescribable maladministration, were needed, in order to restore a prosperous peace-time economy in Germany.

But even if all these difficulties could have been overcome, and the still influential appeasers abroad had succeeded in inducing their peoples to make the gigantic economic effort necessary in order to preserve peace with Germany—even then the thing would have been impossible. For an international arrangement would have presupposed that the Germans were prepared to accommodate themselves in future to a reasonable and peaceful life. They would have had to accept a different mentality; and, strangely enough, there were not a few people in this country and elsewhere who honestly believed that such a possibility existed—under Hitler! In fact, such a thing was absolutely unthinkable, as it was contrary to the very essence of Nazism. Hitler and his myrmidons had emphasised again and again that "Forward!" was the key-word of their "movement," that it had no "reversing-gear." A sudden halt would have meant depression, disenchantment and the return to reason. Even if his people could have been persuaded for a moment to acclaim Hitler as a "Protector of Peace," the great demagogue was well aware of what must soon have been the inevitable consequence if he had abandoned the ambitious Pan-German plans with which the "Master People" had been so long intoxicated. If the Germans had to content themselves with what the representatives of other peoples had agreed to in a calm and peaceful con-



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ference, the question would soon have been asked: "Why then Nazism?" There is nothing in the history of the world to suggest that a dictatorial régime could continue to maintain itself after being forced to accept such a total reversal of its policy. In a democratic State the helm can be set in another direction; a new policy can be introduced by the opposition. The State and its form continue unbroken. Such a thing would have been impossible in Nazi Germany, quite apart from the fact that Hitler did not wish it. The Nazi system itself could not exist in the long run without strident clamour, provocative threats, and boastful promises. Only by pushing on could the mass-psychosis be maintained at the necessary pitch. If the Nazis could no longer put every lad into uniform, provide him with a dagger, and stamp him as a hero—if they could no longer appeal to the greed of the Germans, and to their belief in their "racial superiority," that would have been the end. In the August of 1939 Hitler had to choose between the total breakdown of Nazism, abdication and suicide for himself—or war. Could there be any doubt as to the course which he would take?

## II

While events afford convincing proof that preparations for a war of aggression were the sole purpose of all the "social and economic achievements" in Germany from 1933 to 1939, all that thereafter befell the peoples of the European continent under the slogans of "Living Space" and the "New Order" was carried out with the same perfect logic on the principles of the German "world-philosophy." Once the great burglary of the foreign countries had begun, exactly the same means and methods were used against the enslaved peoples as a whole, and their individual citizens, as had been applied against recalcitrant groups and individuals inside Germany during the period of preparation.

If we consider the system of squeezing out the smaller countries, before their turn came to be swallowed altogether, we note a striking similarity with the progressive pressure against "unreliable" German business men which was described in the first part of this chapter.<sup>1</sup> The small States could purchase temporary permission to remain "neutral" by "collaborating in the New Order," just as in Germany a suspicious Herr X was allowed to carry on his business for a little while if he adapted himself to the "new spirit" by accepting *Gleichschaltung* and appointing a "reliable" Nazi manager. But what the Germans called their "modern barter-agreements," which seemed, in the beginning, not a modern improvement at all, but

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 168-170

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merely a return to the primitive trading methods of past centuries, dictated by the growing scarcity of foreign currency in Germany, soon turned out to be something very much worse. On the familiar lines employed against "unreliables" in Germany, these barter agreements were gradually developed into a perfect system of blackmail and extortion. More and more the smaller countries were dragooned to accept, in exchange for their deliveries, not what they wanted, but what Germany wished to export, although their requirements in the way of musical instruments, aspirin, and *Ersatz* products were soon fully satisfied. After the war had begun, Germany proposed to make counter-deliveries of arms out of her war booty, and one wonders whether it was comfortable for the consignees to know that they were being paid with the weapons of defence stolen from others who, not so long before, had been in a similar position. It cannot have been very pleasant, either, to receive in exchange weapons from one's presumptive aggressor, who not only knew all the details of their construction, but, it was reasonable to suspect, would not supply the most effective implements of war if they were likely to be used against himself. As a classical example of the naivety with which the intelligence of other peoples was either underestimated or disregarded by the Germans, an offer may be mentioned—though in this case it was not of an economic nature—which the German General Staff made to the Dutch authorities shortly before Holland was invaded. One day a consignment of maps of the German frontier districts arrived at the Hague, the Dutchmen being asked if they would kindly reciprocate with a supply of Dutch maps. The bluff did not succeed, the proposal was turned down with a polite letter to the effect that they were unfortunately very short of maps, while the German maps were of no use to them, as they did not intend to invade Germany!

In due course, with the German counter-deliveries shrinking to a minimum, the barter system usually degenerated into a mere one-way traffic, with steadily growing debts on the German side, so that the other partner was faced with the bitter dilemma resulting from the fact that his own economic dependence on the weal or woe of his most intimate foe was increasing every day. But he was not only condemned to become an economic fellow-sufferer with a defeated Germany—he had also to wait patiently to discover whether Hitler might not one day decide to swallow the tributary instead of the tribute. Meanwhile—by way of almost entirely suspending her own deliveries—Germany was even able to secure prepayment for the imminent invasion; the reader will remember that a related method had been applied when the German insurance companies were forced

to pay over to the Nazi Government the compensation for destroyed Jewish property, in order to make good the Government's expenses in respect of arranging the pogroms.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as the stage of actual occupation was reached it appeared still more clearly that the Nazis were simply following their old pattern of dealing with individual "enemies of the State," when they now proceeded to swallow the wealth of whole countries. It was easy for them to boast that requisitions would be "paid in full in the national currency" — when, at the same time, the National Banks of the conquered countries were forced to provide the means by issuing additional bank notes, thus gradually undermining their own currency. This process of dilution was yet further aggravated, as the central banks had also to finance all the deliveries which the industries of their countries had to make to Germany. True, the occupied countries were credited on "clearing account." But at the same time an enormous amount of "costs of occupation" was charged to the debit of this account, in order to convert the German debts into loot. It would not be worth while to expose in greater detail the manifold ingenious devices which, all serving the same purpose, were employed under the cunning guidance of the leader of the "Wirtschaftsgruppe Banken," Baron von Schröder,<sup>2</sup> the same man who had been largely responsible also for the "Aryanisation" of the German economy. In the end it remains the same kind of robbery and proves the same mentality, whether the claims of a man against the State, and his investments in government securities, are simply cancelled, or whether the certificates are confiscated together with his other goods and chattels. Thus the result was just the same whether a conquered country's claims were eliminated with a simple stroke of the pen by the victorious debtor-country or "settled" by way of forcibly debiting the subjugated creditor-country with inflated "costs of occupation," or extinguished by means of any other even more refined trickery.

The steadily increasing entanglement with Germany of the whole economy of the occupied countries was a well-considered, secondary result of the system applied, as will presently appear.<sup>3</sup> In the end all their liquid assets had become more and more imaginary and—after the familiar demolitions accompanying the retreat of the Germans—the palpable wealth of many of the liberated countries was practically reduced mainly to some gold and credits "frozen" in the Allied countries

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 128

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 43, 167.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp 193-194.

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It had been foreseeable that the Nazis would not confine their attempts to the public wealth of the conquered countries. Indeed, they were effecting a methodical and wholesale invasion of the private property also, wherein again the same technique was employed which they had developed in the "Aryanisation" of Germany. German banks and industrial concerns began immediately their profitable business of "taking over" establishments, large and small, except those which belonged to, or were set apart for, the local Quislings. A huge organisation, the "Hermann Goering Trust," was founded for this purpose, a counterpart of the "Hermann Goering Werke" in Germany itself. Reports from Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and, of course, from Poland, prove that the German officials and economists called in to act as "economic leaders" in these countries did, indeed, possess the "complete ability to direct a protected nation in the interest of its German masters," as Zarske, Chief Press-Officer of the General Government of Poland, had delicately put it in a proclamation issued in the autumn of 1940. Everywhere the German "trustees" revealed themselves as parasites, misusing their positions, with the assistance of venal officials, in order to feather their own and their friends' nests. They plundered and liquidated factories whose disappearance was "desirable" in the interest of German competitors, and they helped their protégés to the businesses of tormented owners who had to resign themselves to "selling" them for a song, if they were not simply ejected. Not all the stolen property can readily be restored to the rightful owners—even if the buildings and contents were not destroyed, or removed, by the retreating Germans. For, unfortunately, a considerable number of greedy and unscrupulous accomplices in the neutral countries assisted the Nazis to camouflage their ill-gotten gains and to stow away the loot, particularly in so far as the booty consisted of valuables, or shares, or debts and assets in other countries. It was high time, indeed, that eventually an Allied proclamation made it plain that titles so acquired would not be acknowledged even in the hands of neutrals, though it will be a difficult job to pierce the screen of all the manifold combinations of fraud and lies of every kind behind which most of these transactions have been hidden.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, incidentally, to satisfy the more "modest" acquisitiveness of the common man,<sup>3</sup> a greatly exaggerated rate of exchange for the mark enabled the German soldiers and traders to buy commodities—sometimes also stocks and whole businesses—cheaply, in order to send

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 163-165, 295-296.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 54-56, 60.

#### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MENTALITY

presents to their families and to make good deficiencies in the Reich with the scanty remnants of merchandise which had escaped official requisition.

The pitiful decline of the standard of life in most of the conquered countries, which was bound to follow the deterioration of their currencies, the requisition or buying up of their cattle, food, fuel, and commodities, and the putting of their population upon a scale of rations which often amounted to virtual starvation, was again not merely a concomitant process, but a result intended by the Germans. It was a highly effectual method of forcing the hungry population to "volunteer" for the armies of foreign labourers in Germany. When, nevertheless, the numbers of recruits remained unsatisfactory the man-hunting, which in Poland and Russia had been the method from the very first day of occupation, began also in Western Europe. Once again precisely the same methods were applied, and exactly the same mentality revealed, which we have described in connection with the rounding up, in 1938-9, of the German Jews. To give an example of one single town: at Rotterdam 50,000 boys and men between 17 and 50 years were indiscriminately herded off into the Reich.

Let it be repeated that a sharp and lasting reduction of the whole economic and social level of the conquered countries was in itself one of the principal aims of Nazi policy. It was a beginning of the implementation of their social and economic "ideals," and a gradual preparation of the subjugated nations for the part which was intended for them in the "New Order." The German administration in the conquered countries gave an impressive foretaste of their "New World," and a sound knowledge of the German *Weltanschauung* and the publications of the leading Nazi economists made it plain that the administrative practice was not by any means a mere caricature, but a serious application of their doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Although no clear official definition, either of the New Order itself, or of the space over which it was to be extended, or even of the immediately desired "German Living Space," has ever been supplied, it can be taken for granted that the megalomaniac intention was to extend the "New Order" throughout the whole world, while the "German Living Space" would comprise all Europe, with overseas colonies and Africa as centres of supply which were to be exploited with the help of coloured slaves.<sup>2</sup> The details would be dependent on the successes of the Blitzkrieg, and opportunism would be satisfied with an interim solution. A non-official description

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 83-86, 97.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 52-55, 94

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of the New Order has been published by one of the Nazi theorists, a man who had long influenced economic and social developments in the Third Reich from behind the scenes. This was Werner Daitz, who called himself an engineer. His book,<sup>1</sup> published at a time when at least a partially successful end of the war seemed to its author to be certain declared that the foundation of a "federated Europe under German leadership" was the aim, which meant a Greater Germany, including, around its borders, vassal States completely assimilated to the Nazi political, military, and economic system, and forming a glacis in the event of future wars. There would be left, on the more distant boundaries of Europe, some less dependent puppet States, all of which, however would be required to accept the German "ideology," i.e., the totalitarian dogma, the "leader principle," the racial theory, and the obligation of "collaborating" in a policy and economy designed to secure the predominance of Germany. Trade and industry in all the European countries would be controlled by the Germans. The puppet States would have to abandon highly developed industries and their trade with foreign countries, and virtually convert themselves into "hewers of wood and growers of food." They would have to purchase, by way of barter agreements, all the manufactured goods they needed from Germany, and this mainly in the form of German-produced "substitutes." This evolution would not be confined to Eastern Europe, where a systematic depopulation by the most cruel methods of mass killing of adults and children was included in the German plans. It was expressly stated in the writings of the Nazi economists that it would be quite a mistaken conception, for example, if the Dutch were to imagine that they could still enjoy the privilege of overseas trade and shipping. Like all the other peoples they would have to play the modest part allotted to them inside a continental and almost autarkic economy. The Daitz plan, by its references to autarky and substitutes, indicated clearly enough, though, of course, not explicitly, that it was not yet conceived as the final solution. During a second transitional period, by way of "consolidating" the anticipated minimum achievements of the world war, all preparations would be completed for the final campaign for world domination, just as the preparations for the onslaught of 1939 had been made during the six preceding years of "peace." The dissolution of the British Empire and the abolition of the "Anglo-Saxon capitalistic system" were placed in the foreground as pre-conditions of the proposed full European "Wirtschaftsfreiheit."

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<sup>1</sup>*Europas Wirtschaftsfreiheit* Cf also the publications of Dr Wilhelm Harnisch and Hermann Sorgel in "Deutsche Bergwerkszeitung" (March 1942).

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With this draft of a "European Charter" in mind, a charter which "the German leaders have written across Europe in blood," as *The Times* once put it, all the later hypocritical explanations and promises of a theoretical "social and economic freedom," made in order to paralyse the growing danger of the underground movements in the enslaved countries, can safely be passed over. The increasing number of such "political declarations" since 1943 has been fairly symptomatic as regards the effect of a rapidly worsening war situation on the aspirations<sup>1</sup> of the opportunistic German leaders. Indeed, all these belated manifestos could only confirm our judgment of the mentality of the Nazis and their Pan-Germanist appendage. Hitler's latest disguise as a good European and the proclamation of a "National Socialist Community" with Germany as the centre of a "European Family of Nations," delivered, as a particularly fine example of "transvaluating values," in his speech on the eleventh anniversary of the "seizure of power," could deceive nobody, least of all the subjugated peoples. It was another significant proof of the changeable nature of the "convictions" of the Nazis that, at the end of 1943, in order to obtain urgently needed supplies from Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, which could no longer be intimidated so easily as before, the Germans began to surrender certain bonds and shares of their then Axis partners, shares which had been previously acquired in pursuance of the policy of economic penetration. It was a "conciliatory gesture" which would have been quickly enough reversed in the case of a German victory, and which meanwhile could be used by the vassal governments concerned as a device to "prove the honesty of Germany's intentions." If any proof as to the shameless hypocrisy of the temporary policy of "conciliation" were still needed, it was supplied by the rapid change which occurred in Holland, after D-Day. When it became clear that, sooner or later, the German occupation would become untenable, a ruthless campaign started aiming at the destruction of a great part of the Dutch people, kindred or not kindred. The general strike of the Dutch railwaymen<sup>2</sup> was used as a pretext for the wholesale confiscation not only of the small food reserves, but of all necessities of life, from blankets and perambulators to bicycles, pens, ink and notepaper. The man-hunts became worse and worse; new thousands were deported like cattle under incredible conditions, resembling those of the earlier deportations of the Jews. Wide areas of the arable land were deliberately flooded, and the food rations of the inhabitants

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 172-173.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 51, 57, 87, 94, 101, 139, 168, 170

<sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 173

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of the large towns were reduced to 320 calories, i e., just over one-tenth of what the experts of the League of Nations have found to be necessary for normal human beings. Still, it is noteworthy that, when in the spring of 1945 the spokesman of the Wilhelmstrasse eventually admitted that Germany "with regret had said farewell to Hitler's plan for a New Order in Europe under German hegemony," he added that "future generations of Germans will draw inspiration from the fact that their forefathers had a footing during this war in the Caucasus, above the Arctic Circle, and in Africa," and he ended this statement, significantly enough, by saying that, "if the German plan was ever to be realised, still deeper ploughing would be necessary than was achieved in this war"

The truth about "Living Space and the New Order" was told, for all to read, nearly 2,000 years ago, when Tacitus, discussing the invasion of Gaul by the Germans, pointed out that it was their real aim to become masters of that fertile soil, and when he continued "Freedom and big words were their pretexts, but no man has ever been ambitious to enslave another, or to win power for himself, without using the very same words." The "better future world" in the German conception was simply one in which "Adam delved and Eve span for—the German gentleman." Indeed, what else than the most primitive egoism could be expressed in international social and economic aims which were derived from a world-philosophy that culminated in the brutal proclamation that it was the "mission" of a racially superior master people to conquer and dominate the world? Deplorable as it is, the fact remains with all its consequences that this was the creed—or call it the mania—of the German people as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 47-48, 55-56, 100-105, 139-141, 226-241



## CHAPTER XI

### HITLER'S MIND AND METHODS

*The similarity of the last two German despots, and of the popular reaction to their conduct—Hitler's megalomania and Machiavellian diplomacy*

#### I.

IN the nineties a gaudily coloured print bearing the legend · "Peoples of Europe Unite and Preserve Your Holiest Possessions!" and signed with the well-known flourish of Wilhelm II. was published in Germany, with great display,<sup>1</sup> and distributed as a prize in the schools. It was a sketch of an Amazon defending herself against a crowd of assailants who appeared to be suffering from liver complaints, and it called attention to the "Yellow Peril." The main purpose of this clumsy painting was, of course, to exhibit Wilhelm's artistic talents, his love of peace, and his profound political foresight—although the yellow foes included Chinese and Japanese in the same group. However, Wilhelm's spontaneous appeal to the peoples of Europe to forget their quarrels and to stand together was not in itself a bad inspiration. But it had little success. No one really believed in the peaceable intentions of the "War-Lord"; men remembered not only his bellicose speeches, but also such deeds as the sabotage of the Peace Conference at The Hague, because it was repugnant to his exaggerated idea of the "sovereign rights of a German Kaiser" to submit to international arbitration. Indeed, deplorable after-effects of Wilhelm II.'s evasive formula, which exempted from arbitration "all questions of national honour and vital interest" were noticeable for decades, and can still be felt in our own time.<sup>2</sup>

The Kaiser, "his proffered hand being refused," soon reverted to his more familiar gesture of brandishing the "mailed fist." Henceforward he defeated all attempts to reach an agreement on the limitation of armaments on land or sea. This policy—and his own disappointment—was given poetical expression in his terrific "Song to Aegir." For Wilhelm, it appeared, in addition to his primary talents as a ruler, was not only a first-class painter, but also a poet and com-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 270.

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poser; though some of his own subjects rewarded this versatility with sarcastic smiles. As at this time certain ghost stories about the New Palace were in circulation, the Berliners made the disrespectful jest that a midnight search through the castle revealed only the Emperor playing the "Song to Aegir" at the piano, but "von Geist keine Spur!"<sup>1</sup> The Emperor, however, regarded himself also as an eminent theologian, and preached sermons of his own composition. He also found time for historical research; and the deductions he drew from the newly-made discoveries concerning Hammurabi amazed both the archaeologists and the jurists, and his scientific explanation of Germany's mystical and historic "mission"—already dangerous enough, though still much more modest than in Hitler's version—would doubtless have added to the gaiety of the nations, but for the unfortunate fact that its author was in a position to give, with tragic results, practical expression to his fancies.

The overwhelming "successes" achieved by Wilhelm in every single branch of external and internal policy are well remembered by the older generation. The whole world then had its attention directed to Berlin, whence the unexpected might always be anticipated. The principle followed by Wilhelm was that of the caress alternating with a blow. Only the "short-sighted grumblers in this preposterous talking shop of the *Reichstag*" failed to understand his profound truth that the policy of "zigzagging"—foreshadowing, though still only half-consciously, the "war of nerves" of our own time—was necessary on the way to the "glorious epoch" to which it was the Kaiser's "divine mission" to lead the German people. Only Wilhelm's exalted and unique intellect was capable of clearly perceiving that there was no more certain method of ensuring war—we beg his pardon, peace!—than to provoke and offend one and all, from "Uncle Edward" to the President of the French Republic and "Cousin Nicky," and again and again to strain to breaking-point Germany's relations with all the Great Powers.<sup>2</sup>

In internal affairs also the Emperor almost achieved the impossible. High and low tariffs, social reforms, a bitter struggle against "socialist vagabonds," the mitigation of class contrasts, and the headstrong retention of the obsolete class-franchise of the Prussian Parliament—all these policies were pursued almost simultaneously, and all entirely "off his own bat," with the help of a few "handy men." In his specific sphere, as Highest War Lord and strategist, he was unrivalled. Thus, during the South African War—notwithstanding his famous cable to President Kruger—he magnani-

<sup>1</sup> "Geist" has the twofold meaning of genius and spectre

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp 20-22, 205

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mously placed a personally delineated plan of campaign at the disposal of the British Government, which had only itself to blame for the consequences that ensued when they rejected it. For the military genius of the Emperor was always unerring; which was proved by the fact that when in the *Kriegspiel* played at the Staff College, and on field manoeuvres, his plans did not meet with unanimous approval, the critics' careers were cut short, while his continued in unabated brilliance.

It is well to bear in mind that no more than forty years have passed since these now half-forgotten incidents kept the world in a state of excitement, and to recall to mind the attitude of the Germans of that day. On the whole, they were quite satisfied with their Kaiser. His youthful *gaffe* in dismissing Bismarck, which had temporarily somewhat undermined his popularity, was forgotten or forgiven. A feeble effort on the part of certain circles in the Reichstag to thwart Wilhelm's despotic and unstable policies was unavailing, and the German people was immensely tickled when an East-Prussian squire, who must have been privy to the idea, declared one day that the Emperor would have the whole Reichstag dispersed by a lieutenant and ten men if it were too refractory. "After all, it was the Kaiser's, and not the people's, business to determine policy."<sup>1</sup> Such was the opinion of the majority. They were even proud of their jack-of-all-trades, and many really believed that the whole world must envy Germany her master. Not only the indignation, but the genuine surprise, was indescribable, when in the summer of 1911, at a dinner party in a fashionable German resort, a well-known American inquired very calmly and audibly, in the presence of the author, whether the Germans did not realise that in the U.S.A. the Emperor was generally held to be insane, and that before long his extravagances would lead to war?

In Germany the man in the street—unlike the officers' corps and other circles of the ruling classes—did not believe in a coming war.<sup>2</sup> The country was reasonably prosperous, and once again the old truth was manifest, that inner decay may often make great progress in the lives of individuals and nations, though all the superficial symptoms of health are present. The full depth of the delusion into which Wilhelm's subjects had fallen, many of whom believed in the supernatural and universal genius of the Kaiser no less seriously than he did himself, was to be seen when some of them—and by no means only a few—asccribed the German defeat in 1918 to the fact that, owing to the pressure of certain officers and poli-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 16-18, 62, 65.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 23

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ticians, he had left the conduct of the Great War too much to the generals, instead of following his own inspirations.

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Which is more striking—Hitler's "spiritual" resemblance to Wilhelm, or the similarity of the reactions of the German people to both these men? True, Hitler himself preferred to equate himself with Napoleon or Frederick II. of Prussia. According to some psychiatrists, the fantastic idea seems to have been developing in his mind that he was identical with one of these prototypes—if not with both—and in this his wishful thinking again resembled that of the last Emperor, whose curious *marginalia* gave evidence of his tendency to regard himself as a reincarnation of the "Great King." It would be diverting, on the other hand, to dwell on the contrast between Napoleon's ascent, through brilliant strategy and policy, and Hitler's rise to power through a gigantic beer-cellar propaganda; and again, to elaborate in greater detail the fundamental difference between both the two last German despots and their models—Wilhelm's and Adolf's common lack of that "spirituality" which, after all, was undeniably present in Frederick II.'s "Enlightened Despotism" and Napoleon's world-shaking enterprises. But, confining ourselves to the theme of this book, we must be content to demonstrate the similarity between the two German autocrats only in so far as this enables us to draw certain conclusions as to the mentality of their subjects. What matters to us is not so much the fact that "the Führer" and the Kaiser belong to exactly the same type of megalomaniac autocrat—only the scope and dimensions of their aberrations differing—but that similar reactions were to be observed in two subsequent generations of Germans.

To understand how, with the image of the Kaiser still unfaded, the imagination of a great people could be again seduced, and so much more strongly, by a man of such similar type, one should remember the truism that often enough, in the lives of peoples and individuals, the same folly is committed twice. It was the type which pleased the Germans and, indeed, the bearing and methods of both these men were remarkably well attuned to the German taste. Hitler's "intuition" and his rudeness harmonised with the German mood of 1933, as Wilhelm's "genius" had found resonance in the yet less completely brutalised German mind of 1900.

To impress the German people, the supreme ruler must, above all, be a soldier—the highest soldier of all, the War-Lord Wilhelm II. owed most of the nation's respect to his military displays, however dilettante they may have been. The popular contempt felt for the German Republic was largely due to the fact that the demo-

cratic politicians could not, and did not want to, pose as generals. Hitler won the hearts of the people by putting them into a new uniform<sup>1</sup> and making himself the Commander-in-Chief of his S.A. People abroad smiled when a little later, and still in time of peace, the paperhanger appointed himself Supreme War-Lord, but neither Hitler himself nor the German people felt the ridicule. Even when he did not confine himself to the nominal position, but began to hold reviews, and to order the movements of the troops in person, only a few angry old officers sneered in secret at the resemblance to Wilhelm II. When the man without any professional military education, far from contenting himself with comparatively harmless manoeuvres, like those of Wilhelm, ordered the march into the Rhineland—the lance-corporal overruling the advice of his generals—this was still a political rather than a military decision: he was relying on the democratic peoples' love of peace, and the inability of their statesmen to understand in time the full significance of this preliminary step. But the success of this piece of bluff which, from a professional military point of view, was an act of almost criminal audacity, established in the eyes of the German people, in his own opinion, and even among the generals of the new *Wehrmacht*, the reputation of the Leader as a War-Lord of such supernatural greatness that he was entitled, in future, to enforce the most hazardous plans of his own against all professional objections.

The similarity between the last two German rulers appears strikingly in their pompous manifestations — political speeches, "scientific" lectures, parades, mass-meetings, or what not—which, while they revealed the same deficiencies, were always attuned, with well-considered cunning, to some trait of the German mentality: sometimes merely to the German lust of boasting, sometimes rather to the covetousness, or the chauvinism, of the masses. Thus, it was not merely an expression of bad taste, but a shrewd appeal to the vanity of the German people, when Wilhelm, at the beginning of the century, enforced a "koto" of atonement from a Chinese prince; and when Hitler, in the summer of 1940, insisted that the armistice with France should be signed in Marshal Foch's old saloon-car, thereby symbolising the anticipated reversal of Germany's defeat in the Great War. When Wilhelm promised "a place in the sun" and "splendid times," and when Hitler assured the Germans that he would conquer new "Living Space" for them, and make them a "People of Lords," they were making the same appeal to the bellicose 'covetousness' of the masses. Wilhelm, with his threats of the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 61-65

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 249-250

Cf. pp. 20, 54, 56, 60, 68, 77-80, 85, 139-140, 152-154, 159, 189, 193

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"glistening coat of mail" and the "mail-clad fist," and his "test-mobilisations," was experimenting, though still in a somewhat amateurish fashion, with the method of intimidation which Hitler developed into the "war of nerves." Again, both men were trying to do something more than act upon the nerves of the threatened peoples; their bragging of Germany's strength was as much intended to impress their own people and to gratify its national pride.

Incidentally, the psychologists will tell us that an excessive display of bravery, combined with attempts to intimidate others, is not infrequently the abreaction from a secret personal timidity which is perfectly consistent with megalomania. In this context it is worthy of note that Hitler's war-record of "hysterical amblyopia" (temporary blindness due to subconscious fear, as the thing to be contradicted) may be compared with Wilhelm's complex in respect of his crippled arm. Hitler's Iron Cross furnishes no counter-evidence. For in the absence of any indication as to the particular feat for which it was awarded, it was a rather mysterious distinction, and it is said that it was given to him by Ludendorff when they became associated after the war.

Wilhelm's and Adolf's speeches reveal surprising analogies in arrangement and content. Hitler's political addresses, which—in spite of all their contradictions—read as though retelling again and again the same old story, began invariably with a distorted historical survey, a pageant of Germany's heroes, paraded in the typical manner of Wilhelm II, though of course, with a less dynastic colouring. Whereas Wilhelm never failed to refer to "His Majesty my late grandfather," whom he called "Wilhelm the Great," Hitler relied more on the glorification of the "early victims of the national revolution who fell on the home front"—that is, in the beer cellar battles with tankards and broken chair-legs. Apart from this and some other small divergencies, however, Wilhelm's conception of history, and even his style, were both closely followed by the Fuhrer. The inevitable reference to Germany's historical and cultural "mission" was common ground, though Hitler supplied a "racial" motive to justify the same expansionist urge. Hitler was reviving the Kaiser's favourite methods when he continually complained of the "refusal of his peaceful hand," and of "attempts to encircle Germany," or when he boasted of his own prudence, energy, and self-sacrifice, and of his many "achievements," in a manner even more tasteless than Wilhelm's self-adulation. Both men revealed the same malignant and conceited mentality, in particular in their references to former German statesmen. True, the Kaiser's sneers were slightly more

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refined, as when he spoke of his grandfather's "understrappers"—among whom he included Bismarck — or when he showed Tsar Nicholas II., on his last visit to Berlin, the place in the small castle garden on the Spree, where he had dismissed Chancellor Bulow, with the words: "It was here that I turned that low scoundrel out of doors." Hitler, in accordance with his greater vulgarity and the progressive brutalisation of the listening masses, simply bellowed at his predecessors and his adversaries, indiscriminately describing them as "criminals, Jews, pluto-democrats, warmongers and Bolsheviks." Both men also revealed in their speeches the same confusion of their personal and political opponents with "enemies of the State," a typical symptom of the megalomania of despots. Wilhelm called the German socialists "political vagabonds without a fatherland" who should emigrate as quickly as possible. Hitler publicly threatened every adversary with the concentration camp. Wilhelm's impertinences were smilingly accepted by the German public; Hitler's fulminations were even loudly acclaimed by the excited masses.

Both orators obviously regarded their performances as a necessary and recurrent form of treatment, intended not only to reinforce, from time to time, the minds of their subjects, but also to boost their own prestige. One of their most significant common methods serving this purpose was to "settle accounts" with foreign statesmen. While the Kaiser, after many diplomatic defeats, restricted himself to more indirect attacks, Hitler recklessly falsified the events which followed Germany's defeat in the Great War and misused them in a wild propaganda campaign, violently abusing both his internal and external opponents. He proclaimed the tendentious legend of the "stab in the back," the "betrayal of President Wilson's fourteen points," the "ignominious treaty of Versailles," and the "fourteen years of humiliation" under the Republic of Weimar. It is worth while to dwell for a moment on this recurrent theme of Hitler's speeches; not in order to discuss his arguments, but because the methodical primitiveness of his rhetoric throws a peculiar light upon the mentality of both the Leader and his followers. Hitler's "settling of accounts" was noticeable not merely in the ever-growing rudeness of tone and of personal invective, significant though this was of the sinking level of taste of the orator and his listeners. The excessive patience of the foreign statesmen and diplomatists attacked was hardly less remarkable and, indeed, deplorable, with regard to the dangerous repercussions of the German mentality. For the man in the street inevitably regarded this amazing tolerance as sheer weakness.

But there was yet another feature of Hitler's dialectic in the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 209-210

"settling of accounts" which deserves special mention. This was the Fuhrer's resort to the "tu quoque" method, beloved of schoolboys as a defence against inconvenient accusations, and used by Hitler once and again when a new German onslaught had been exposed. To bawl "And you're another!" at everyone who brought any sort of charge against him had become a perfect panacea with Hitler. The greater part of his audience was obviously too stupid to perceive that a justified accusation cannot be repudiated by simply trying to turn the tables. Many, even of his German listeners, must have felt as much. If, nevertheless, they enjoyed this method, we are forced to conclude that they regarded with approval all those base actions which, as they could not be denied, had to be "justified" by a counter-accusation. Naturally, many Germans were aware, for instance, that the foundations of the wealth of peoples, as of families, have almost always been laid with a ruthlessness which seems barbarous to the modern sense—though not if it be compared with Nazi methods. But the Germans obviously did not wish to understand that our disapproval can only lead to the generally accepted conclusion that such methods of a former Imperialism must be abandoned, and that in future the best possible use must be made of the existing wealth in order to raise the level of social and economic life throughout the world, and, above all, in those less developed countries which have been objects of exploitation. The Germans preferred to applaud Hitler's conclusion that all wealth must be transferred to Germany, apparently as a sort of compensation, and that all must acknowledge that henceforth it was Germany's turn, in the name of "Living Space" and the "New Order," to rob and suppress her European neighbours, and to exploit as slaves, in the full sense of the word, the coloured populations in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Obviously no one in Germany felt ashamed of this kind of argument. President Roosevelt was the only foreign statesman who, in peacetime, got under Hitler's guard with the trenchant remark that the point in question was not something that once might have happened somewhere in the world, but what was going on in Czechoslovakia in 1939. With that the "tu quoque" was stopped for a time, but it soon made its reappearance. Indeed, the "tu quoque" habit meant more than an occasional childish argument. It betrayed Hitler's own mentality — ruthless, shrewd, perverted, and narrow-minded at the same time; it was significant of the incessant attempts to bully other peoples; and its repercussion threw a vivid light on the rooted disinclination of the Germans to listen, and seriously consider, the opinion of others.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 54-56, 193-195.



#### HITLER'S MIND AND METHODS

A further recurrent speciality of Hitler's eloquence is no less remarkable. On the re-occupation and re-fortification of the Rhineland, and on the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, as on many other occasions, his speeches culminated in the solemn assurance to the world that this was his "last territorial claim," a declaration which was followed almost immediately by another "last" claim. The method constituted a further development of the Kaiser's policy of alternatively offering a "pat on the back and a blow."<sup>1</sup> Psychiatrists explained that this was due to a coercive perception, like that of the drunkard, who always explains that this is to be his very last drink. This diagnosis, however, could be accepted only with the reservation that Hitler himself—and his German listeners—certainly did not believe such assertions.<sup>2</sup> It may be that the great opportunist would have brought his succession of "last" claims to a temporary close if he had met unexpectedly with a strong resistance. But a glance at *Mein Kampf* shows—and our experience confirms the retrospective conclusion—that even this would have meant only a postponement, until the latest booty had been digested, and still better preparations for a new onslaught had been completed. We shall presently see that to make promises with the preconceived intention of breaking them was a familiar trick of German, and especially of Nazi diplomacy, well understood and approved by German public opinion.<sup>3</sup>

The similarity to the Kaiser was again striking when Hitler, addressing an audience of learned international specialists, posed as a universal genius, and a great artist and connoisseur.<sup>4</sup> Germany alone remained unaware of the Homeric laughter at the platitudes and absurdities which arose when this and other speeches on the arts were broadcast throughout the world. Outmatching Wilhelm's scientific dabbings, he discovered entirely by "intuition" a highly developed early German culture, which, he pretended, was brought to Rome by German captives 2,000 years ago, and similarly, he proclaimed as the historical truth mere imaginations of his own fancy—obviously provoked by Wagner's musical dramas—as to the cultural life in the Germany of the early Middle Ages. But he did not stop at this. Convinced of his own infallibility, he turned, as we have seen, all departments of human knowledge in Germany upside down, "transformed" the very foundations of theology, history, biology, and juris-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 21, 198

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 56-58, 156, 230-233

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 195, 211-212, 217-218, 229-233

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 108-109, 162, 198

prudence, and presented the world with the *ne plus ultra* of the German "world-philosophy."<sup>1</sup>

However, there is one remarkable difference between the two last German despots. Wilhelm, though he often intoxicated himself with his own grandiloquent verbosity, had still been cautious in drawing practical conclusions. When the final disaster overcame the "Reich" he was taken aback by the sudden realisation that he had snared himself in the net of his bragging and deceitful utterances. He behaved like a child who "hadn't meant that!"<sup>2</sup> Hitler's theories meant business, one only had to understand the true meaning of his "transvaluations" of words and moral values. It was significant that he named his book *Mein Kampf*, and that continually a "battle" was described as being fought for this or that "ideal." For him the practical application of the all-pervading "new ideology" was the decisive point: and as soon as the "world philosophy" was proclaimed, in which the "spirit of Nazism" was condensed, it became the radiant centre from which, under his leadership, decomposition spread to all walks of life.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, if ever the expression "a decomposing mind"<sup>4</sup> was to the point, it was so in Hitler's case. What he called the "dynamic" of his movement—embodied in himself—has been defined by others more appropriately as nihilism.

All independent thinking within his reach was at an end. Hitler's "purges" of the world of spirit meant something more than the removal by the Kaiser of a few refractory scholars from their professorial chairs. He chased from every university and school in Germany every single teacher who did not immediately conform to pattern. More than 1,000 had been dismissed by 1933, and the number had doubled up to 1936.<sup>5</sup> He stupefied the whole spiritual life of his country, banning and burning many thousands of books. Things became still worse when the turn of the conquered countries came. The whole intelligentsia of Poland and Czechoslovakia was to be exterminated when it appeared that their spiritual resistance could not be broken; and before long it was seen that the complacent hope of those who had thought that these crimes would be confined to the "inferior races" of Eastern Europe—just as the same people had once believed that Hitler would content himself with the extermination of the German Jews<sup>6</sup>—was again mistaken. There was no halting for the "Nordic Race." In Holland, Belgium, and Norway universities and High Schools were closed; scholars, teachers and

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 55-56, 82-85

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 21-24.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 83-84, 94-102

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 99

<sup>5</sup>These figures include many "non-Aryans."

<sup>6</sup>Cf pp. 81-82

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priests were removed and thrown into concentration camps. Again it was Wilhelm's theory. "Smash all who bar the way!" which Hitler put into terrible practice. Has anyone ever heard that the Germans made a really serious attempt to oppose these outrages?<sup>1</sup>

The Kaiser had aspired to absolutism. Hitler's power was indeed unrestricted. His ministers, Gauleiters and generals had to obey him unconditionally. The new *Reichstag*—though, or rather, perhaps, because it was exclusively composed of Party members—was reduced to complete impotence, and had merely to supply the background to the Leader's speeches, and to applaud. The "electorate," which formerly, under the Kaiser, had been amused by the vain attempts of their representatives to make a show of independence,<sup>2</sup> was by no means uneasy about the ridiculous position of the "National Assembly" called together for one day once a year under the "one party system." Even the great annual Party meeting at Nuremberg had only to furnish another opportunity of displaying the greatness and omnipotence of the "Leader."

There was nothing left, indeed, which would distinguish Hitler's autocracy from that of an ancient tyrant. Hitler at his zenith might say not merely "L'Etat c'est moi!" but also "La loi c'est moi!" No law, no prohibition existed in respect of the Fuhrer.

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The German Leader's great fellow-countryman, Goethe, in *Faust*, made Mephistopheles describe himself as a "part of that power which aims ever at the bad, but brings about the good." This, of course, had not been meant as an argument to concede extenuating circumstances to the Devil, and nobody would regard Hitler, the embodiment of all evil, as less guilty because he, too, at long last brought about the good result of rousing the defensive powers of the world against himself and his aggression. But moral, historical, and sometimes even juridical guilt on the one hand, and full medical responsibility on the other, fall into different categories. While, as regards the former two, only an insignificant number of oddities, outside the "totalitarian" orbit, would still contest that the objective facts *per se* vindicate the severest sentence against this scourge of mankind, and while the death of the monster may have spared us the trouble of deciding the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 103-105, 141-142, 173, 186-187, 231.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 16-18, 199.

<sup>3</sup>A Reichstag motion of April 26th, 1942, confirmed that the Leader in his capacity as "supreme law lord" (*oberster Gerichtsherr*) was entitled "to compel every German, by all means he deems suitable, to fulfil his duty, and in the event of his neglecting his duty to punish him." Cf p 118

difficult question whether mental disease had destroyed his powers of resistance to such a degree that he was irresponsible in the eyes of the law, the psychiatric problem still remains. It bears directly upon the principal subject of this book—the German craze in its totality—and, in particular, upon the purpose of the present chapter, which is to throw more light upon the maniacal character and origin of the Nazi system by illuminating in greater depth the “spiritual” background, i.e., the existing interconnection between the insane state of mind of the leader, and many of his gang, on the one side, and the morbid mentality of the led, on the other.<sup>1</sup>

Too little is known of Hitler’s carefully veiled youth to admit of cut and dried theories as to the profounder causes of his peculiar mental development. His birth as a child of a third marriage of an elderly petty official in a little Austrian town, his father’s narrow-minded sternness and the weakness of his mother, his poor education, his disappointment when his imaginary talent for painting did not meet with the appreciation of the experts or the public—such things are the lot of thousands, who do not therefore either take leave of their senses, or revolutionise the world, but live and die in obscurity. It is quite possible that the world would have been spared much suffering if the young Hitler had succeeded in obtaining a modest appointment as a drawing master, or had secured a job in a post-office, and had married. It may be also that a revealing light would be thrown on the deeper causes of his furious hatred of the Jews, if we knew more of his personal adversities. As matters stand, so much only can be said with certainty: that there is nothing in his earlier life which would be inconsistent with the diagnosis of his state of mind which clearly follows from his later actions and behaviour, and with the retrospective conjecture that he was a congenital hysteric.

General symptoms—quite apart from those already mentioned and from the many isolated actions which are clear indications of insanity—prove beyond doubt that Hitler suffered from megalomania in a much higher degree than the Kaiser ever did. Even a layman could hardly fail to interpret correctly the clinical significance of the phenomenon when the great National “Socialist” suddenly began to build, at immense public expense, fantastically furnished lodgings for himself in Berlin and Munich, and a castle at Berchtesgaden, and still another one on an almost inaccessible mountain summit. Moreover—and certainly not because his “intuition” had already enabled him to foresee the destruction of Berlin from the air—he built at Berchtesgaden, his usual place of residence,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 227-229.

a whole town of government buildings, at a time when his subjects were informed that, unfortunately, it was impossible to remedy the heavy shortage of houses, because all building materials and labour were needed for the new "Siegfried Line." Nothing seemed big enough for Hitler. He once declared to a foreign diplomatist who spoke with admiration of the size of the then newly-erected stadium in Berlin, that it was actually far too small, it would have to be pulled down and greatly enlarged. It was not very unusual, indeed, for costly new buildings—for example, his Chancellery—to be demolished almost immediately and rebuilt on a still larger scale. But even more significant than this building mania are the other excesses of his fantasy.

We are aware of the well-nigh unimaginable terrorism which he exercised through his Praetorian Guards, and of the almost naive misuse of the powers of the State for the satisfaction of his personal vindictiveness—a typical symptom of the megalomania of despots. The case of Pastor Niemöller, imprisoned in the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen on the personal order of Hitler—because of the pastor's refusal to idolise him—is widely known. All efforts to save the victim were unavailing — and many such efforts were made, not only by organisations and well-known personalities abroad, but also by certain prominent members of Hitler's own entourage, who would have been pleased to see this notorious scandal ended. Even the great parade figure of the Nazis, old Field-Marshal von Mackensen, temporarily fell into disgrace when he tried to speak in favour of the pastor. One clearly felt the insane hatred of a megalomaniac, who saw a personal offender and a felon in every thinker, even of the past, who was the exponent of a different *Weltanschauung*, when it became known, after the invasion of Russia, that the house of Leo Tolstoi had to be destroyed meticulously, in order to extinguish his memory. It is a well-known fact that Hitler was so obsessed by the urge to follow only his own intuitions that objections could merely arouse his passions, and arguments, for the most part, did not even reach his perceptions. His entourage trembled at his fits of hysterical fury, and the bringer of bad news was in no less danger of losing his life than he would have been under Nero. He often declared that he had established the Nazi Reich "for a thousand years," and that he was the "greatest German," nay, the greatest man, of all times. Far exceeding Wilhelm's mystical faith in the divine right of kings, he attempted to abolish not only the Christian creed, but all the European religions, and aspired not merely to temporal world domination, but to deification. Exploiting, and at the same time outdoing the pre-

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scription of his patron saint, Nietzsche, that "it is a passion of the Germans to follow a despot who has succeeded in inspiring a sort of divine veneration,"<sup>1</sup> it became Hitler's ambition to be adored as a real God, like the Japanese Mikado, the Son of the Sun

It was already a sign of megalomania to conceive the plan of becoming the dictator of the Germans, and still more to attempt the fantastic adventure in the way actually adopted. When it succeeded, when the incredible happened, what could be the ultimate outcome with a man whose hysterical temper and innate brutality were not controlled by a sound intellectual training, or by any religious or moral obligations? Under the adoration of the fanatical masses, under the continual and ecstatic adulation of his myrmidons—flattering him, cringing before him, fearing him—his feeble self-discipline was bound to surrender to the permanent vision of his own enormous might. His brain was doomed ultimately to lose all perception of the boundaries allotted to every human being. His moral and mental insanity was at its height when he staked the fate of his 60 millions of morbid addicts on the devilish adventure of making himself the ruler of the world. He still believed in his mission when the game was unmistakably lost. Whether he died by cerebral haemorrhage, or suicide, or murder—if he is dead—there would be nothing in his end which could influence the diagnosis. Does it not read like a portrait of the German leader when Tacitus brilliantly describes the megalomania of despots: "Boundless, overweening estimation of themselves, the worst abuses of power, prodigality, blind hatred of every adversary, and reckless brutality—all ending in bloodthirsty madness"? Even the belief of the Roman tyrants in astrology was not lacking in Hitler's case.

## II

It may be repeated at this juncture that this chapter is not primarily conceived as a monograph upon Hitler's mind. But the popular political mentality and, in particular, the mental inter-action between the Fuhrer and the German people, which is the essential object of the following chapter, could not be fully understood without first giving the reader an impression of Hitler's whole personality and way of thinking, and pointing, once more, to the reactions of the Germans to his speeches and other activities. When we now proceed to consider some of the characteristic methods of Hitler's external politics, it is again the resonance of this crooked policy, not only among the Nazi chieftains and ministers, but among the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 55-56, 68, 84-86, 229-235

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German masses, which matters most to us. We have confined ourselves, so far, to pointing to the striking parallelism between the principles of the two last German despots. But one must also take into consideration the characteristic traits of the traditional Prussian policy. The reader himself must judge, after all, how much of the Nazi methods was due to tradition, and how much was "new and unique"—born partly of the insanity of the ruler and some, at least, of his chieftains, and partly of the perverted *Weltanschauung*, which eventually governed the mentality of the whole nation.

The psychologists, Freud among them, pointed early enough to Hitler's insanity. Certain foreign diplomatists in Berlin were aware of it. But they, and the majority of foreign statesmen, underestimated, as they did in the case of Wilhelm II., the magnitude of the public danger of a megalomaniac in the powerful position of a German ruler. They did not realise what it would mean if the wild plans of world-conquest hatched by a sick mind, and elaborated with extreme astuteness and German thoroughness, should one day be put into execution by an autocrat with all the strength of a people of more than sixty millions at his absolute disposal. War is and has always been an immanent danger of autocracy. In the case of Germany, however, it was not only an inevitable outcome, but an obvious aim, from the very first day of Nazi rule.<sup>1</sup> Retrospectively, it seems almost unbelievable that—with the facts unfolding before their eyes, with a despot at the helm in Germany, whose book, whose outspoken philosophy of force, and whose megalomania made it plain that he would use, as soon as he was ready, the vast powers assembling under his control for a monstrous assault—that the world, sleepy and unimpressed, should have carried on in the old track.

Immediately after the "seizure of power" the fatal doctrines of Machiavelli were put into practice with an almost incredible cynicism; and the political assassinations, by fanatics or venal thugs, of Dollfuss, Barthou, King Alexander of Yugoslavia, and many others, illustrate the manner in which Ignatius of Loyola's theory, that the end must always justify the means, was applied in politics, as it had been adopted in "law." For Hitler it was a matter of course that every international treaty might be violated if it appeared profitable to do so. The parallelism is striking, between the pettifogging practice of the Nazi law-courts in misusing the *clausula rebus sic stantibus*,<sup>2</sup> and the familiar justification offered by Hitler when he repudiated international obligations and treaties: that Germany had been blackmailed, or simply that "circumstances had changed." However, as indicated before, Hitler's apparently unique combina-

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 159-160

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 113, 122

tion of power-politics and treachery has long been a well-known principle of German diplomacy and political strategy. Once more, the only really original thing about the Fuhrer was the unexampled depth of his baseness and vulgarity. The cynical *bon-mots* as to the "insignificance" of oaths and treaties of the two most witty of the Prussian Kings—Frederick II, who in a youthful essay had still tried to dissociate himself from Machiavelli's doctrine, and Frederick William IV. — have been common knowledge, though not in Germany, for 200 and 100 years respectively. But one should remember also the argument in Bismarck's "famous" speech with regard to the Poles "I have a great deal of sympathy with them," he said, "but if we want to exist, we have to crush them. The wolf is not responsible if he does what our Lord has created him to do." True, elsewhere, too, in foreign politics the friends of to-day often enough became the enemies of to-morrow, "according as interests coincided or clashed." What the Prussian autocrats must be particularly blamed for is the fact that their vicious policy in the last two centuries deliberately maintained that "proverbially low morality of Government in relation to international obligations" which had been a characteristic of the 16th century, when it had, indeed, been generally regarded as a matter of course that "treaties were binding only in so far and for so long as they subserved the interests of the States that made them."<sup>1</sup> We had another classic example of German Machiavellism when, in 1914, the "Chancellor with the philosophical touch," Bethmann-Hollweg, explained that "a scrap of paper" ought not to hinder the violation of Belgian neutrality. Though this phrase has been so widely quoted, it has never been sufficiently appreciated that it merely expressed what had become, in the course of time, the general German conviction. According to the popular German way of political thinking, which had gradually developed on the lines of Prussian power-policy, it was a matter of course that the Chancellor should appoint himself judge in his own case. It was not he who was hypocritical, but other people, who pretended indignation, although, in the German opinion, they would have done just the same in a similar situation. It is because of this mentality that only a few people in Germany have really felt ashamed of Hitler's politics.<sup>2</sup> Again it was a well-timed reminder, not only with respect to the identity of the Kaiser's and the Fuhrer's political philosophy, born out of German tradition, and the similarity of the attitude of two generations of Germans, but this time also with regard to the estimation of two generations of Englishmen as to the German poli-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. J. B. Black, *Oxford History of England* (Reign of Elizabeth) p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 153-157, 229-235.



tical ethics, when *The Times*, under the heading "Old and True," quoted from a speech which Mr. Lloyd George had made in 1914 "Treaties? They tangle the feet of Germany in her advance Cut them with the sword! Little nations? They hinder the advance of Germans Trample them in the mire under the German heel! The Russian Slav? He challenges the supremacy of Germany in Europe. Hurl your legions on him and massacre him!"

True though it is that for many years the coming war was to be foreseen, it is also true that no human being could make any detailed predictions as to the kind, direction, and extent of the outrages which might be expected from Hitler's demoniac brain. At one time there were people who swore that you had only to look up *Mein Kampf* if you wanted to know at what time and in what direction Hitler's next train would start. Soon even this time-table became unreliable. Indeed, Wilhelm's so-called "spontaneity" was nothing compared with Hitler's opportunistic actions, which, though always attuned to the final purpose of conquest and oppression, continually changed their immediate targets with a sort of insidious malignity. Only if you eliminated any thought of restraint, if you anticipated every extreme of unscrupulousness, whether friends or foes were in question, and if you could in imagination regard things in general from the standpoint of a chemically pure opportunism, only then had you the least chance of understanding how this man might act and react. This sentence was written during the initial stage of the war, and, with this notion in mind, it was only too clear that if he were ever cornered the reactions of the German leader would become, as they did indeed, more and more those of a wild animal. Nevertheless, there was "method in this madness", and a closer examination of some characteristic features of the Nazi devices remains interesting from the historical and psychological point of view.

We have tried in various passages of this book to draw the reader's attention to the fact that in the Nazis' activities in almost all walks of life one might perceive an amazing uniformity of procedure.<sup>1</sup> This applies also to politics and diplomacy. One might say indeed that they followed a few master patterns, which have been used again and again, with very slight variations, by Hitler himself, by his understrappers, and by all the Nazi authorities, from the diplomatists, politicians and economists to the Gestapo. As from the very beginning their ultimate aim was always the same—"Out with your property!"—so, often to the smallest details, it was the same refined

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 56

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 81-82, 121-123, 188-190, 191-193, 211.

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technique of intimidation and force which was applied, whether Herr X or a neighbouring State was the victim.<sup>1</sup>

Before any action was taken, the waters in which the Nazis wanted to fish were troubled, that is, the mood of the masses was properly prepared. To this end, individual "enemies of the State" were publicly charged in the press with every imaginable crime—homicide, indecent assault, bribery, theft, fraud, embezzlement, smuggling of foreign currencies, and tax-evasion were the usual charges, to which, in the case of the clergy, the seduction of minors of both sexes could always be added. "Eyewitnesses" were supplied by the Party organisation, though often enough these gentlemen had never seen their victim or heard his name before. Similarly, in the impeachment of neighbouring peoples there were invariably accusations of murder, arson and burglary—the victims always being peaceable German citizens—brutal attacks upon German minorities, and, after the outbreak of war, "violations of neutrality." Newspaper reports, based on wild unverified rumours, provided the necessary proof, and the tainted evidence of Nazi consuls or group-leaders broadcast by wireless did what else was required to increase the national excitement. To exacerbate the popular fury, the fears of the public had to be aroused. Thus, just as the very harmless Herr X was always pictured as a kind of dangerous vampire, so in the case of a neighbouring State, the "perilous threat to Germany's security" could not be too luridly accentuated, even if the other country did not possess one-tenth of Germany's population and military power.

In the case of Herr X the charges, apart from the obligatory notification to the Gestapo, might be directed by the Party advisers to the address of a dozen different authorities, some of them especially created for the purpose, one, for example, bearing the highly suggestive title of "Office for Commercial Ethics."<sup>2</sup> To secure the best possible result from this preliminary "war of nerves," all the denunciations had to be despatched on the same day, so that the defendant might be overwhelmed with a sheaf of summonses of the most intimidating character; and precisely the same wretched trick was employed against the smaller States. For just as the "demand for a statement by Monday morning" was always made on a Saturday, so that the accused individual was prevented from consulting his solicitor, matters were so arranged that the governments of small States, served suddenly with unexpected and menacing notes or

<sup>1</sup>See also President Roosevelt's similar comprehensive statement after the Quebec Conference: "Hitler's only method of dealing with his neighbour is first to delude him with lies, then to attack him treacherously, then to beat him down and step on him, and then either to kill him or enslave him."

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 166-170

ultimata, could not reach the leading statesmen of the Great Powers in time to obtain advice and assistance. The "infuriated masses," i.e., the hooligans who meanwhile, under the guidance of the Gestapo,<sup>1</sup> had to demonstrate before the flat, or the place of business, of Herr X, or in front of the bishop's palace—were replaced, in the case of neighbouring peoples, by "Free Corps," composed of similar elements, or by troop-concentrations on their frontiers.

While Herr X was summoned to the Gestapo, and then, with or without appropriate treatment in a concentration camp, was either allowed silently to disappear after having "voluntarily foregone" all his property, or was "shot while escaping," or tortured and starved to death, foreign statesmen were "invited" to Berchtesgaden, Berlin, or Munich—and later to the "Führer-Hauptquartier"—to be dealt with appropriately. There was little difference whether they were kings or presidents, or regents in the place of existent or non-existent monarchs, and whether or not they had quite recently been accorded princely honours and hailed as valued friends. They had to yield to every demand, and to hand over all that the Germans "needed." They could evade imprisonment only if they were prepared "voluntarily" to consent to their countries being converted into German vassal States, with a "protector" at the head, who would play the same part as a Nazi Trustee in the case of private property.<sup>2</sup> Even in peace-time international arbitration was as much out of the question as was resort to a court of law in the case of an individual victim.

Is there any material difference between the tactics employed against individuals and against the smaller countries? However, in order to obtain a fuller insight into the practice of Nazi diplomacy, which so characteristically reflected Hitler's personal mentality and methods, no more enlightening example could be found than the incident of Munich and the following developments, to which the next few pages may be devoted.

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It cannot have been a very easy matter for a British Premier to fly three times to Germany, in order to negotiate with the wild German chief. Whatever one may think of Mr. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, and of the visits which he had previously paid to Mussolini—Hitler was a different proposition. Even the curious fascination of looking the world's bugbear in the face, and testing his own strength against his very opposite, cannot have done much to lessen the natural aversion which a man of peace, morality, and religion, as Mr. Chamberlain styled himself, must have felt on

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 133-134.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 152-153, 159.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 168, 192.

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shaking hands with Hitler. It must be admitted that only a firm resolution to do his utmost, in order to preserve the peace of Europe, can have induced this prudent and experienced elderly gentleman to defy the scepticism of all those who explained how useless, and even dangerous, it was to make such a desperate attempt to come to terms with Nazis, and to stake his whole reputation on his declared conviction that there was no question which could not be solved by negotiation—if only the parties were honestly anxious to arrive at a solution. Those who understood the Nazi mentality were only too well aware that it was precisely this primary hypothesis that was lacking, and that Mr Chamberlain's methods were inevitably bound to fail against an opponent who regarded them with undisguised contempt—who, indeed, saw nothing else in them than fear, weakness, and stupidity. Behind this—quite apart from the immediate political and moral issue itself—the fundamental contrast appears between the British and the German way of thinking. In the British there is a prevalent desire for the calm, reasonable, and peaceful adjustment of existing differences to the satisfaction of both parties on the principle of "live and let live," even if this means the abandoning of some legal claim, in the Germans the natural course is enforcement of one's own will, or pretended right, even if it creates hatred and often does not pay<sup>1</sup>. It is this deep temperamental difference, evolved in the course of their respective histories, which has made the British born democrats, and the Germans the subservient admirers of their tyrants, and "Herrenmenschen" only towards "inferiors." One of the foremost Prussian despots, the "Soldier King," had openly declared that Tiberius' *oderint dum metuant* (if only they stand in fear, I do not care if they hate me) was his own motto in external and internal politics. But—though they stood in fear indeed—he was not even hated by his subjects, and was adulated by later generations of Germans.

It was only too clear that application of the principle of force, and bullying of every kind, would be carried to extremes by a man like Hitler at the height of his power. Violence is an element of despotism, and Mussolini had just made the amazing discovery that

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<sup>1</sup>It may be worth while to note a small personal experience. When once, after a visit to Paris, I asked my German driver his opinion of the street-traffic, it turned out that what had puzzled the man most was the mutual consideration observed, as a matter of course, by drivers and pedestrians, without a policeman's interference—for nobody insisted on his better "right." A little while afterwards, a Berlin newspaper man conceived the fanciful idea of evoking a similar sense in the German drivers. He proposed to publish in his paper the names of chauffeurs whose politeness was attested by the public, and promised them a plaque with the legend "Knight of the Wheel." The attempt failed—though not because of the clumsiness of the "distinction" which was, indeed, much appreciated by the "Knights", but merely because the required reasonable patience was too strange to the German temper.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 147-148.

it was really more "moral" than compromise, because *sacro egoismo* was a "law of ethics" in itself.<sup>1</sup> It was not for Hitler to "bargain"; it was not "heroic"; it was a "shopkeeper's" method. He considered it beneath his dignity ever to renounce, or even to reduce, a claim which he had once made. Moreover, it was for others to approach him "voluntarily" with their offers, which he had only to accept—but they must be worth accepting. If, notwithstanding, he himself ever undertook to make a suggestion, he was irritated and offended beyond words if this "act of prudent moderation"—though usually an "offer," in the Siegfried manner, to leave the other party, provisionally, a fraction of his property and a phantom existence<sup>2</sup>—was not immediately accepted with thanks. If you declined, you had "refused his outstretched hand." Then, in accordance with the legend on the Swastika badge—"now more than ever!"—he increased his claims and felt "morally" entitled to use force. If, however, the other party submitted to the original claim, there was no moral reason in his, and in the general German, opinion why he should not immediately make further claims.

This method of beginning "negotiations" with a "minimum demand," which, however excessive it might be, had forthwith to be accepted, after which additional demands were made, must be noted as a Nazi speciality. It has been consistently applied against individuals and peoples, both in the economic and in the political field, and gradually it came to be the trump card of diplomatic and commercial practice. A prominent Nazi economist once cynically admitted, in the author's presence, that this was "a well-considered system." The case of Czechoslovakia is a paramount example of the successful application of this method. Hitler had started his "negotiations" with the premeditated intention of seizing the remainder of the country as soon as his first claim to the "Sudeten" districts had been satisfied, and when the Czechs, demobilised and deprived of their strong defence line on the mountain frontier, had surrendered any possibility of successful military resistance. Exactly the same tactics were attempted against Poland and other small countries and great European nations alike, from Memel to France and Greece. But it is not merely a matter of "different methods," as the Nazis liked to assert, whether by bargaining you endeavour to hammer out an honest treaty, or whether you deceive the other party as to your real intentions, by first pretending to claim less than you mean to obtain, and then increasing your demand by degrees. If this kind of "negotiation," dishonest and fraudulent as it is in any case, is further misused in the Nazi manner

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 159, note 1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 9, 85.

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so as to make the opponent incapable of resistance, it can no longer be distinguished from blackmail. Of course, the Germans knew this well enough. The practice was a typical example of that hypocrisy which we have often enough exposed as one of the most significant traits of the German mentality of to-day. We must remember that it was an axiom not only of official Machiavellism but also of the general "world-philosophy" that all means were permissible if they served the "interests" of Germany.

It is obvious that when Mr Chamberlain attempted honestly to negotiate with Hitler, without any personal experience of the Fuhrer's mentality, he was unable quickly enough to see through and counteract his methods. The mere fact that he tried to "appease" Hitler shows how completely he misunderstood him. For Hitler, too, it may have been a surprise, though not an inconvenient one, to discover that his opponent had not realised beforehand that he had made up his mind to go to extremes, and that it was impossible by any means to purchase anything more from him than at most a brief postponement of the onslaught. In any case, the honesty of this "British greenhorn" had to be properly exploited. Anyone who, by personal observations over a number of years, had acquired a sound knowledge of the mentality and the methods of the Nazis, could prophesy that at Munich only two alternatives were possible: The "haggling offer of the British shopkeeper" would be refused at once, heroically and bombastically — if the Nazis felt strong enough to impose their will immediately. But if the risk of immediate action appeared too great—as it evidently did—an "agreement" would be entered into, reluctantly and with the reserved intention of breaking their pledged word at the first opportunity. And this they did, when, after the undermining of the Czechs' power of resistance, the German preparations in the Sudeten district had been completed. Hitler acted exactly in accordance with the Nazi mentality and the well-known Nazi tactics, when in the spring of 1939 he ordered the march into Prague, and he could plume himself on the fact that, with his familiar trick of making a preliminary minor claim, he had outmanoeuvred the "simpletons" who had believed in the possibility of an honest settlement with the Nazis.

And here another trait emerges once again. It was not simply an impostor's mentality with which we had to deal. What gave the peculiar stamp to Hitler's methods, and to his every single action, was invariably his megalomania. Now, the combination of trickery with overweening self-conceit—perhaps with a genuine megalomania, though of a lesser degree—was, indeed, a characteristic of all the Nazis, and, one might say, of the whole generation of the

Herrenvolk.<sup>1</sup> We know that in the eyes of Hitler and his staff, the statesmen of the democratic countries and their generals were altogether incompetent. Hitler has often enough declared that he considered it to be one of his greatest misfortunes that he always had to deal with nincompoops, who, in their narrow-minded obstinacy, could not understand that in the end all attempts to resist him were senseless and criminal. Of course, this harmonised perfectly with the general Nazi policy of exercising terror; but it was not simply bluffing. When it was seen that the arch-aggressor again and again accused peaceful neighbouring peoples of war-mongering, the psychiatrists reminded us that this might be explained as a symptom of the persecution mania which is frequently combined with the megalomania of tyrants: by virtue of his megalomania Hitler might have seen not aggression but defence in his own assaults on foreign nations, who, in his view, were rebels because they opposed his "right of the stronger." But we are not obliged to fall back on the purely psychiatric explanation, however plausible the diagnosis may be in Hitler's case. The almost incredible despotism which prevailed among the German ruling classes — particularly the "Junkers" — had already, a hundred years ago, inspired a poetical satire by the well-known democratic German dialect writer, Reuter.<sup>2</sup> Now, although Hitler was not precisely a man of seigniorial descent, the satire throws some light on the reactions of one accustomed, as Hitler has been, to the fawning servility of his entourage and his subjects. Reuter writes of a Mecklenburgian squire, in the middle of the nineteenth century, who had engaged a private tutor. At an aristocratic party the young man made so bold as to behave towards one of the noblest guests as though he had been an equal. When he was roughly rebuked he left the castle and claimed a month's salary. A summons was served on the squire, who at once wrote to the court, saying that, although he was much obliged for the summons, he did not wish any proceedings to be taken. Also, of course, he did not want to pay. A second summons followed, and again the baron wrote stating very distinctly that under no circumstances did he wish any proceedings to follow. When a decision was made in favour of the plaintiff, he lost all faith in the law of his country, and it was never possible to explain to this grandee how a court of justice could have given a judgment against him, as he had never expressed a desire that the case should be brought into court. Hitler's megalomaniac sentiments were precisely those of the squire with the bull's

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 228-230

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 12, 99

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head on his coat of arms.<sup>1</sup> Like the grandee who regarded it as an unheard-of piece of insolence for a "servant" to bring a suit against him, and felt that the divine order of the universe was undermined by the fact that a court of law should permit such a thing, so Hitler and his gangster chiefs, at the summit of their successful career, considered it the most shocking impudence that their "inferior" opponents should dare to wage war. They could hardly bring themselves to admit that a state of war could really exist against the express will of the Leader, whose privilege it was to declare war when all was ready for his onslaughts on other peoples, to be dealt with methodically one at a time. It was open rebellion against this sacred order when others upset those well-considered plans, instead of modestly waiting until their turn had come. More, to revolt against the Leader's will was simply "criminal stupidity." For not only was his power irresistible, and his intuition unerring, but he had been even magnanimous enough to warn the others of the hopelessness of any resistance. Theoretically, they were conquered in advance, so that any bloodshed that occurred was "superfluous." If only these foreign statesmen had been more "intelligent" there would have been no loss of life. Why could they not understand the real situation, as did German subjects and even the more "teachable" inhabitants of certain other countries?—Of course, this was not all blind vanity on the part of the leading Nazis; there was enough premeditated intention in their grandiloquence to impress the nerves of foreign statesmen undergoing treatment in the conference chamber. But it would be wrong to underrate the extent to which the Nazis' policy of bullying was backed by a genuine megalomaniac conviction of their own superiority. This state of mind had to be fully understood, indeed, in order to find the adequate answer to German power politics, in diplomacy as in other spheres of life.

Such were the mentality and the methods with which Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier were confronted in the autumn of 1938, and to which so many other statesmen—by no means all of them Quislings, or cowards, or nincompoops—fell victims both before and after that date. In order the better to appreciate the situation, the reader also should retrospectively take into consideration that peculiar combination of military pressure and treachery which revealed itself in this war as a further characteristic feature of Hitler's diplomacy and tactics. He would be a poor psychologist who should overlook the fact that at times the craftiest plans are devised by a sick brain. But although the purest extract of Nazi Machiavellism was to be found in Hitler himself, the other gangsters showed funda-

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<sup>1</sup>The coat of arms of Mecklenburg shows a heraldic bull's head



## HITLER'S MIND AND METHODS

mentally the same psychic combination; and their efficiency, too, should not have been underestimated. This applies, in particular, to Hitler's "Bismarck en miniature," the Foreign Secretary, Ribbentrop. The British Ambassador in Berlin was chiefly impressed by this man's "obstinate stupidity"; but we have to admit that he, and many of his colleagues, have shown a notable share of malignant cunning.

It was certainly no easy task to deal with these fully equipped exponents of all the evil traditions of Prussian statesmanship, reinforced by Nazi methods, and already in itself it would appear understandable that both the British and the French Prime Ministers were not equal to this sort of trickery. Moreover, often enough in the past, when politicians of goodwill reproached a statesman with treachery, or with a policy of naked force, they, for all this, had a certain secret admiration for the man, and a feeling that, after all, one might eventually come to an understanding even with such a buccaneer. Did Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier feel anything of this kind at Munich, and is this, perhaps, a partial explanation why they walked into Hitler's trap? Or did they in fact yield only because there was absolutely no other way out, having regard to the conditions of British and French armaments in the autumn of 1938? Another question still remains unanswered which has, at least briefly, to be mentioned here. For though it turns primarily on British conditions, it allows at the same time for some reflections on the paralysing influence which the Nazi mind still exercised upon those circles who—through such associations as the Anglo-German Fellowship, or with respect to personal or business connections—were particularly exposed to its radiations. The question is: Why on earth, when by his second onslaught upon Czechoslovakia Hitler's treachery was so strikingly revealed to all of us—why from this very moment was not rearmament in this country and in France carried out on the gigantic scale that everybody had expected? Could the then leading statesmen of the Western Powers, after having learnt something, by their personal observations and experiences, of the mentality of the new German "mechanised Attila," still have any doubt that Hitler and his generals would continue their armament drive and their other war preparations on the vastest scale, and with an expert shrewdness and thoroughness which it would be very difficult to surpass? It simply is not understandable that they did not profit from their dearly bought experience and make use of every moment.

The developments after Munich show clearly, at all events, that Hitler and Ribbentrop were fully convinced that they could proceed on their course with impunity. The silent acceptance of the march into Prague still further confirmed their persuasion that under no

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circumstances were the "degenerate British" prepared to fight; and one can well imagine that Hitler, in the summer of 1939, when the crime committed in Czechoslovakia was about to be repeated in Poland, expected yet another visit from Mr. Chamberlain. He would have resorted then once more to his familiar tactics, asserting that the Polish Corridor was his last territorial claim, and that, being thus fully satisfied, he would keep the peace in future. Why should not the foreign statesmen, who had so often confidently accepted fresh assurances at the very moment when he had newly broken his word, yet once more succumb to their wishful thinking? Again the similarity is striking between 1914 and 1939, and again the greater moral depravity on Hitler's side makes the only essential difference. Like Wilhelm, who, from his dynastic viewpoint, had regarded a punitive expedition against the Serbs as desirable—even at the price of a resulting war with Russia, but not a world war<sup>1</sup>—Hitler wanted his war against the Poles. The acquisition of the industrial districts of Upper Silesia had by that time become an "economic necessity" for Germany, as we have seen, and the attack was due as a further step on the way to Eastern Europe, moreover, the lance-corporal, after the bloodless conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia, was longing for the triumph of a real military victory, to legitimize himself as Germany's "Supreme War Lord" in future, greater onslaughts.<sup>2</sup> But, like Wilhelm, the Leader did not want a second front in the West; certainly not at a moment when his armaments for a great European war were not yet complete; and he felt quite confident that this danger did not really exist. Practical considerations confirmed the impression of Munich: the Western Powers had no material interests in Eastern Europe, and a man like Hitler did not believe in "idealistic" motives. Apart from this, he and his chiefs relied on the strong subversive influence in political life of their Fifth Columns, of their wealthy adherents everywhere, Fascists and semi-Fascists, an influence which afterwards proved so fatal in France.<sup>3</sup> How deeply these conceptions were rooted in Hitler's mind is shown by his surprise and fury when the unexpected happened—when war was declared by Britain and France. His was a typical, almost naive anger, that once again these simpletons had not reacted as they should have done. How could he play his political and military game when these fools always did idiotic things which he and the German experts had not foreseen? There simply must not be war in the West, where he wanted peace, inasmuch as it soon became evident that, in spite of the bold stroke of the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 187-189, 201, 250.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 235-237, 257, 311.

neutrality pact, the great Russian bear would by no means be so harmless a neighbour as the little Polish wolf had been. Thus, after the conquest of Poland, Great Britain and France were requested to stop the "unnecessary" war, so wantonly forced upon the Leader against his will—though Germany, of course, would retain her prey.

This was again exactly the same method of combined force, intimidation, and trickery, as that applied before and after the refortification of the Rhineland and the onslaughts on Austria and Czechoslovakia, and once more attempted in Hitler's Reichstag speech after the defeat of France, to quote only a few incidents. Only those were astonished who did not understand the typical, obstinate, megalomaniac mentality of this man, so similar, in all its primitiveness, to that of Reuter's eccentric Junker, and here combined with a complete inability to apprehend the moral conceptions of free men and nations. Only on the grounds of this mentality is it explicable that Hitler, in his boundless cynicism, believed that, in order to restore peace in the West, he had only to declare his readiness to break with Russia, and to mount once more his old hobby-horse, calling, in the pose of a new Siegfried, for allies in his struggle to slay the Bolshevist dragon. It is quite obvious that the sudden attack on Russia, when it appeared that under the neutrality pact Germany would not have things all her own way in the East, was precipitated by such vague beliefs. Even after the conclusion of the Russo-British Alliance hopes were running high in the leading Nazi circles that before very long this "unnatural marriage" would break down, and that then the time would be ripe to restore peace in the West, in order "to settle the Russian account"—reserving, of course, full liberty to resume the plan for world domination at a more suitable moment. This devilish idea had its culmination in the fantastic flight of Hess, and it makes little difference whether his journey was approved by Hitler or, perhaps a little precipitatedly, undertaken on Hess's own account. For even after this abortive incident the plan was by no means abandoned, as was shown by the subsequent manifold attempts to create mistrust and discord between Russia and her allies; among them the shameless proposal, made in the summer of 1944, to barter the Hungarian Jews<sup>1</sup> for war material which "would only be used against Russia. To complete the picture of Nazi Machiavellism, the overtures must not be forgotten which Hitler almost simultaneously made to Russia, when it appeared that he had greatly misconceived the Russian strength.

The Fuhrer certainly could not be accused of misjudging the emotional tendencies and currents of opinion in his own country. Indeed, we had more than once to draw attention to the skill with

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p 134

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which he played on the instrument of the German mentality. But it was one thing to lead German subjects, and another to judge the mentality of free peoples. The underestimation of the importance of the opinions and feelings of the man in the street in the democratic countries was the hidden flaw in many of Hitler's calculations. The general German disinclination to listen to the arguments of others, or to have proper regard for their sentiments, was, of course, especially conspicuous in the megalomaniac bully himself. He had never troubled about and, indeed, was quite unable to grasp, a foreigner's, and especially the British way of thinking. How could he, accustomed as he was to manipulate the German herd-instinct, he who had so perfectly succeeded in instilling his own hypocritical opportunism into the German masses, and in hypnotising them to such a degree that they blindly followed not only his commands but all his fantastic trains of thought, however contradictory<sup>1</sup>—how could he have any idea of the weight of honest and independent public opinion in the democratic countries? How could he estimate the watchful attention by which it insists that politics shall be conducted in accordance with decency, reason, and national honour? It is typical of the one-sidedness of the Nazi mentality that, like most of the other Nazi experts on foreign policy, even the Cairo-born Hess, who had spent a great part of his youth abroad, and the Foreign Secretary, Ribbentrop, although he had lived for years in London as Hitler's ambassador, had never acquired a sound notion of the nature of democracy. The Nazi politicians, diplomatists and generals, like Hitler himself, were simply incapable of appreciating the fundamental difference between the slavish German mentality and that of free men, who had learnt to distrust and despise both German political propaganda and German diplomacy, since bitter experience had gradually taught them their real meaning. The complete failure of the Nazis to estimate correctly the democratic mind, and the paramount importance of public opinion in a democratic country, proved even more disastrous to them than the mistakes they made in selecting and judging the mentality of certain foreign politicians and would-be-politicians, to whom they made their tentative overtures. The thought apparently had never entered the minds of the Nazi chiefs that no democratic government could have allowed Germany to get away with her booty, because, even if a minister, sacrificing all self-respect, had been prepared to acquiesce, this would have meant political suicide, as he would immediately have forfeited the public confidence.

It was this megalomaniac blindness as to the depth of the exist-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 66-68, 229-233

ing gulf between the two popular mentalities — indeed, the gulf between moral perversion and political madness on the one side, and sober decency on the other — which constituted the intrinsic reason why from the beginning to the end of this war, the vain attempts at deceiving, blackmailing, and sowing discord among the Allies were repeated again and again; and also why even the most refined plans of the Machiavellian diplomacy of the Nazis were doomed to miscarry. From their own purely opportunist and perfectly amoral point of view, the arbitrary argument that Germany “took” Czechoslovakia and Poland because she “needed” the “living space” of these nations, had appeared perfectly adequate to the German leaders—and their followers.<sup>1</sup> What was Poland to Great Britain? The German political leaders did not observe, and assuredly did not care, that—when the march into Prague had made it clear even to the blind that the slogan of the “Liberation of the German brothers abroad” had been the merest cant—a sudden revolt of public opinion in the democratic countries ensued, and a rapid falling-off in the numbers of those who had held that “mere ideological dissensions” should not hinder a close co-operation with Germany in the sphere of economics, etc. No Nazi politician could perceive that what he called the “degeneracy” of the democracies, and what was, in fact, their inner strength and the gist of their civilisation—i.e., tolerance, decency, and the wish to avoid the use of force—certainly did not mean that they would yield to the law of the jungle. The Germans might have anticipated that the British would rise against them if they felt that their own motherland was endangered—though there were some of their diplomatists and experts who hesitated, on the grounds of the fancied “Western degeneracy,” to believe even this—while it was generally doubted in Germany whether even in such a case the dominions and colonies would ever follow the call of the motherland, and Nazi propaganda trumpeted that a war would be the signal for the “sick body of the British Empire” to break asunder. That the whole British Commonwealth, and, indeed, little by little, the whole democratic world, so far as it was not overrun betimes by Germany, could voluntarily unite in a war from which no profit was to be expected, “merely” in defence of the fundamentals of civilisation, and in the conviction that honesty and adherence to treaty obligations are principles indispensable to the security of the world and a reasonable way of life: this notion, indeed, could only evoke a sardonic smile from men like Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering, Goebbels and Himmler. That this is no rhetorical phrase, but a sober reality, appears from the fact that five years later they still

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 53-55, 153-155, 159

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could not bring themselves to accept the clear proof. Still, in the spring of 1944, the Wilhelmstrasse pointed out to representatives of the foreign press that all the "declamations of the Dominion Prime Ministers assembled in London meant nothing more than the gathering of the daughters round the death-bed of the Imperial mother, while the sons-in-law, in the anteroom, are loudly disputing about the heritage."

It was still more beyond the German horizon that gradually it had become an axiom to all true democrats that there must be an end, once and for all, and at any sacrifice, to the continuous and intolerable misuse of force and threat of war—and that once they had clearly understood the issue, the democratic peoples had firmly made up their minds not to rest until the German focus of the evil—i.e., not merely Hitler and his National Socialism, but the whole Pan-Germanist madness and the spirit of aggression — was definitely exorcised. In the eyes of the German leaders this sober resolve was nothing more than an empty phrase, proclaimed after their own fashion by way of boasting, or a means of intimidation. Therefore it was not very difficult to predict that, in spite of the demand of "unconditional surrender" proclaimed at Casablanca,<sup>1</sup> the curious "peace offensives" would be repeated persistently, whether through the mediation of unscrupulous protagonists of international wealth, or through that of the extreme pacifists. The German claims would diminish, according as opportunism demanded it, and in proportion as the war drew nearer to the fatherland—an evolution similar to that we have observed in the economic field.<sup>2</sup> Goebbels even went so far—in an article published in *Das Reich* at the end of November, 1944—as flatly to deny "that the Germans felt themselves superior to other nations." But all the German approaches before the complete breakdown—including those of the former "ruling classes," involving the overthrowing of Hitler and the Nazis with the assistance of a military clique<sup>3</sup>—were bound to evade our ultimate aim: the final renouncement of Pan-Germanism and militarism and the deliverance of the world from the danger of German aggression. All the overtures were, of necessity, based on the vain hope that it might still be possible to demoralise the democracies from within, and on the belief that dishonest propaganda and the natural longing for peace might again lull to sleep a world that had awakened to the full realisation of the German menace.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 239-241.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 172-173, 195-196

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 235-237, 243, 246-248.

## CHAPTER XII

### "HITLERISM"

*The Masses—The Forces—Germans abroad—The Refugees—  
Anti-Nazis in Germany*

HAVING examined the environment in which the peculiar German mentality developed into Nazism—having indicated the spiritual, social, and economic "accomplishments" of the Nazis, and the general attitude of the German public in respect of these achievements and the personality and methods of the *Führer*, we still have to explain the strange phenomenon of "Hitlerism" itself: the fact (with all that it means) that to the bulk of the Germans Hitler became an object of real adoration and the pivot on which all their thoughts and actions turned. Some observations as to the mentality of the German army, which was often believed to be something quite independent of, and different from, the civilian mentality, may usefully be added. Finally, a few words must be devoted to the mentality of the German communities in other countries; of German anti-Nazis living abroad, and refugees; and of Hitler's opponents inside Germany.

#### I

#### THE MASSES

The mysterious fact that within the last twenty years the very creed of many millions of Germans had become literally embodied in the person of Adolf Hitler; the fact that, with amazing speed, the radiations of his paranoia so aggravated the morbid German mentality that Nazism rapidly developed into "Hitlerism," forms the most important, and, psychologically at any rate, the most interesting feature of German history since 1923. Notwithstanding all that has been said in earlier passages concerning the excitable German temperament and the explosive state of mind which had developed since the Great War, the reader must make a genuine effort of imagination if he is to obtain an adequate impression of the high potential to which the German powers of fantasy have gradually been raised under the Nazi régime. The fact of Hitler's megalomania has never been realised in Germany, just as the Germans never believed in the

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madness of the Kaiser. The average German, for whom the peerless personality of the *Fuhrer* was incessantly displayed in the limelight, and contrasted with the malignant and disgusting descriptions, first of the men of Weimar, and later of the timid, degenerate, war-mongering statesmen of other countries, was living in an atmosphere of unreality and emotion, and was perpetually excited and stimulated anew. Hitler was shown to him, as we have seen, not only as the rebuilders of the "Reich" in even greater splendour than before, but as the national Saviour promised by providence — a Saviour of just that rather material kind which appealed to the general mood, the mystical achiever of a German mission to make a conquered world the domain of the Master People.

All this, however, does not yet furnish a complete explanation of "Hitlerism." One main factor must be added, which, in our opinion, constitutes the real crux of the matter: both Nazism and Hitler's paranoia grew on the same soil, and both are fundamentally the same malady. Moreover, Hitler's personality reflected the instincts of the people with extraordinary preciseness. Hitlerism was nothing psychically alien, nothing artificially implanted in the mind of the German masses. It was a congenital condition of mind. Just as the pathogenic matter festering in the mind of the Leader poisoned again and again the sick body of the people, so Hitler's own malady drew constantly fresh aliment from the morbid excitement of the masses — at all events during the years of ascent and success. This perpetual mutual reinfection between different parts of the same sick body, a megalomaniac Leader, on the one hand, and a people of psychopathic lability, on the other, constitutes the main reason why the German masses fell so hopelessly into the toils of Hitlerism, while in other countries doctrines similar to those of "National Socialism" could affect only such comparatively small sections of the population as might offer, for any special reason, a reduced power of resistance.

"Hitlerism" was a specific German disease of the mind. That does not mean, of course, that every individual follower of Hitler was dangerously insane. But the people as a whole were—and many still are—suffering from a genuine mass-infection, and though the gravity of their condition was not comparable with Hitler's megalomania, it remains a debatable question whether a great proportion of Hitler's individual adherents ought not to be regarded as mentally unsound in the clinical sense. Finally, the morbid mentality of the German masses was complementary to that of their Leader; the mass will to be dominated complemented the Leader's will to dominate. Thus, the symptoms of the mass psychosis show the appro-



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priate distinction from Hitler's. In other words, Hitler's megalomania encountered a specific inferiority-complex of the led in respect of the *Fuhrer's* personality.

It is in the light of this psychic interdependence of the Leader and the led that one has to consider the mentality of those Germans ensnared by Hitlerism. On examining both Hitler's mentality and that of his subjects, one could observe something more than a merely one-sided spiritual domination exercised by Hitler over the mass of the German people. There was a distinct mutual interaction between the mind of Hitler and the minds of his subjects. Sometimes the masses, by virtue of the close relationship between their own mentality and Hitler's, had a presentiment of the ideas which were still hatching in the Leader's brain; and even when the gossip of the alehouse politicians seemed, on first hearing, to be mere scatter-brained nonsense, events subsequently proved that they were better able to divine the nature of Hitler's sinister meditations than the experienced diplomatists. The converse is no less true. If you endeavoured to analyse Hitler's mode of thinking, you would often discover that his "intuition" had followed the same semi-instinctive lines as the mental operations of the masses.

The exactness of this spiritual concurrence between Hitler and his subjects was indeed amazing. Fear was not the explanation when at the mass meetings, the immense crowds applauded frantically the declaration of Goering and Goebbels, that it was sheer self-deception on the part of other countries to imagine that a wedge could ever be driven between the German people and their Leader. When Hitler roared, over the heads of the jubilant masses, that he and the German people were one, the enthusiasm of his hearers was genuine. Certainly it was a distortion of the facts, when Goebbels claimed that "the leadership was only carrying out the will of the German people"—inasmuch as the German people had no political will of its own. But it had the will to run behind its Leader. This state of mind explains why the majority of the Germans were absolutely unable to appreciate the shock experienced by every genuine democrat in or outside of Germany on Hitler's usurpation of power, and interpreted it as sheer fear. They themselves were not shocked by his thinly disguised self-appointment, because for them a people's right to determine its own destiny was in no way axiomatic or sacrosanct. Moreover, the seizure of power by this man, like the man himself, was congenial to their own impulses and most deeply-rooted ideals.<sup>1</sup> Following instinctively his sinister train of thought, because of their herd-instinct they did not feel obliged, or even entitled, to consider whether the hypocritical and brutal actions of their Dictator were

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 42, 64-68

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really in the interest of Germany, or whether they might have to answer for them before God and mankind. Intoxicated by the elevation of their nation to a people of superior race, and of themselves to born noblemen, they felt, as we have seen, that they were justified in despising and insulting the members of the alleged inferior races. They simply could not understand that the "right of the strongest" has no moral justification whatever, and that it is contrary to religion, ethics, and civilisation to enlarge one's own possessions, or "living space," by robbing others, and by enslaving individuals and peoples—even for one's own pretended "necessities of life." They believed, indeed, that only that was "right" which was useful to themselves, and that Adolf Hitler alone could be allowed to decide that question.<sup>1</sup>

This being so, Goebbels could claim with some truth that "Germany need not indulge in the democratic luxury of allowing independent newspapers to expound their differing views to the masses, so that the people can form their own opinion—or even of permitting the masses to listen to foreign wireless bulletins. The Government can restrict itself to putting one view only before the people—its own; which is more profitable for the people (!), and the people agrees." The assertion that the people agreed to this *ne plus ultra* of impudence was, unfortunately, correct, as regards a great proportion of the Germans, incomprehensible though this may appear to a democratic mind. How little the average German desired to learn the political truth by seeing with his own eyes was demonstrated when the Nazis, immediately after the seizure of power, completely muzzled the Press and provided all newspapers and periodicals with "reliable" Nazi editors. The standard of the Press declined so rapidly that the bewildered author wondered what the general reaction would be—there was no reaction. A very few members of the educated classes tried, for a time, to obtain information by subscribing to foreign newspapers. But the author, who vividly remembers his own anger when his English and French newspapers were again and again intercepted by the censor, never observed any signs of general resentment on such occasions. The Germans isolated themselves obediently from the outer world, and closed their ears to the "strains of the sirens from abroad" lest they be poisoned. The general public, ordered to listen to Goebbels' loud-speakers, was satisfied with the official truth, and swallowed, day after day, the prescribed dose of intoxicating propaganda, giving ear with equal enthusiasm to what "the Doctor" proclaimed in his oleaginous, would-be witty manner, or what Goering babbled in his

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 49-50, 85-86, 118, 147-150, 153, 159.

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puerile mountebank-jargon, or what Hitler himself declared, in bombastic phrases interlarded with fearful threats. Even the nauseous arrogance of the tone in which the ordinary German wireless announcers, in imitation of Goebbels' insolence, delivered their daily quota of lies, failed to offend the Germans—though they had once been accustomed to better things.

Foreigners were sometimes unable to conceive that Hitler himself could really believe that his misrepresentations would ever be taken seriously in other countries. Accordingly, they concluded that certain of his speeches were destined especially for "home consumption." But they were mistaken in supposing that it was the Germans who were to be deluded into accepting his obvious inconsistencies. Those who were present at mass meetings, as the author was, got the impression that the listeners were well aware that the *Fuhrer's* statements were intended to deceive the public abroad, while the German masses proudly felt that they were privy, so to speak, to the conspiracy, and that they knew "more than could be said in public." What all the clumsy distortions and contradictions really revealed was the common delusion of Hitler and his devotees as to the information, the apparently inexhaustible credulity, and the mode of thought of other peoples, a delusion due, on the one hand, to the Leader's megalomania and his subjects' belief in his "magical powers," and, on the other, to the blindness betrayed by many European diplomatists.

Indeed, the contradictions to be observed in all walks of life under the Nazi régime were so obvious, that we should be greatly underestimating the intellectual powers of the Germans if we thought that they had not detected them, especially since they often enough immediately affected the man in the street. We have sufficiently exposed these inconsistencies in other contexts, particularly with respect to economics.<sup>1</sup> But they were numerous enough even as regards private life. Women had readily submitted when they were told, in 1933, that it was not decent, or "German," to wear trousers, and the moral depravity of Russia could not then be described in too alarming terms, for the Russians, it was said, had "communized" all women. When, in 1939, at the famous Munich carnival, nude scenes of a character too shameless to describe were publicly produced in Hitler's presence, the enthusiasm for this new "freedom" was no less remarkable, and the German "Gretchen" was quick to learn and proud to accept her function when Hitler informed her that even unmarried women had to produce soldiers, and that willing fathers were available from the ranks of the S.S. and S.A.<sup>2</sup> Naturally

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 174

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 93.

also, the contradictions in Hitler's external politics did not remain unnoticed in Germany.<sup>1</sup> But the masses were equally satisfied when the *Fuhrer* concluded, and broke, treaties of friendship and non-aggression, when he boasted that he wanted only men of German blood in Germany, and when he indiscriminately incorporated peoples of other races; when he denied having any further territorial claims in Europe, and when he attacked and practically annexed Czechoslovakia and Poland, and proceeded to do the same with Holland, Luxembourg, and parts of Belgium and France. Indeed, it cannot often enough be repeated that Hitler's paranoia and the Nazism of the German people were maladies of fundamentally the same character and that, in particular, Hitler's opportunism encountered a complementary mentality in his subjects. Their political lability—their astonishing power of self-deception, and the easy swinging of the German mind from one extreme to another—enabled them to swallow Hitler's almost incredible inconsistencies with the same levity with which their fathers had once put up with Wilhelm II's policy of "zigzagging." In spite of Hitler's own dogma, expressed in *Mein Kampf*, that no dictator could ever change his standpoint, even in matters of secondary importance, because that would destroy the very basis of his position, i.e., the faith in his infallibility, no sign has ever been observed that the German people as a whole had wished to draw the practical conclusion. Even when the period of setbacks came, they were, for a long time, not too severely disturbed at the obvious failure of numerous boastful prophecies, inasmuch as they felt that these had been made on the ground of the same kind of wishful thinking which they shared themselves. After the collapse of the Atlantic Wall Goebbels could pronounce that the whole thing had been foreseen—though Hitler had claimed after Dieppe that the Allies would be thrown into the sea within a few hours if ever they should attempt to make a new landing. Eventually the popular fancy could be deluded by evoking the hope that new secret weapons would bring about a miracle. It may be worth our while to recall to mind a similar episode which had occurred in 1918. Prince Max of Baden tells in his memoirs the story of a high officer who had always been rather pessimistic, and a strong advocate of a peace of understanding. One day he suddenly broke into a Staff conference and shouted: "Don't worry any more; world domination is ours!" That was when "Big Bertha" had been put into operation.

Nothing was too strong for the German palate, and the naive hope of certain stars in psychological warfare, that the fury of the masses could be roused against their Nazi leaders if only Hitler's

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 156

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inconsistencies were revealed, betrayed a misunderstanding of the German mentality almost as great as the German misconception of the mind of free peoples. It did not even disturb the faith of the Germans in their Leader when the B.B.C. produced from gramophone records a juxtaposition of the most striking contradictions, in Hitler's own unmistakable, roaring, yelping, choking voice. The only effect of this "elucidation" on the Germans was, probably, to persuade a few listeners that foreigners were no longer quite as blind as they had assumed. But, apart from the fact that few would risk the death penalty merely in order to learn, once again, what everyone knew already only too well—it may be taken for granted that most Germans were perfectly unable to understand why the people abroad should take these inconsistencies so dreadfully seriously. The German masses had observed for years, with naive complacency and primitive pride, how magnificently Hitler had succeeded in his treacherous diplomacy. Indeed, they had delighted in his trickery.<sup>1</sup> "Why were you such fools?" was the feeling of the man in the street. They had thought as the *Führer* did when he claimed, again and again, that his "successes were proof of Germany's right." For some considerable time they had actually believed—as did their fathers in the period of Wilhelm II<sup>2</sup> — that the foreign peoples envied the Germans their Leader. The majority of Germans, in any case, judging others by themselves, stuck to the last to their belief in Hitler's assertion that all the moral indignation expressed in foreign countries was utterly hypocritical. No doubt they are still convinced that their neighbours are no less opportunistic in their thinking than they themselves. Broadcasting to Germans on the hypocrisy of Nazi politics will be a highly useful device in the re-education of a new generation of the Germans, as to the present, and particularly during the war, it was hardly of any greater value than to explain the wickedness of a burglar or impostor to his abettors.<sup>3</sup>

The true appearance — seen from within — of the average German mentality differed greatly from the general view of the Germans held in this country on the outbreak of war. When, in 1939, you spoke to any Englishmen, of whatever class, the difference between the mental attitude of the English public and the state of mind obtaining in 1914 was obvious. In 1939 no one liked to hold the German people as a whole responsible for what the Nazi Government was doing. One could see with one's own eyes the attitude of

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 156, 204, 212

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 199-200

<sup>3</sup>The broadcasting of certain German prisoners, conveying their own experiences and converted political opinions (cf. p. 322, note 3) was a much more hopeful experiment

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German refugees. One read in the newspapers about the masses of Hitler's opponents in Germany. Occasionally a message from one of them, somehow conveyed to a neutral or allied editor, and expressing the most profound hatred of Nazism, was printed or read over the wireless. Some "initiated" person reminded the public that, after Munich, German antagonists of Hitler had expressed their regret that war had been averted, as thereby a revolt had been delayed which would otherwise have broken out. Many people still believed in the vague assertions that large groups of Hitler's opponents in Germany had been waiting only for the declaration of war, as the "necessary precondition of a revolution"—that the people should be armed<sup>1</sup>—would then have existed. Some time later, even a *Times* leader declared that the "discrimination" between the Nazis and the German people could not be "maintained" if the Germans failed to free themselves from their oppressors before the war had been virtually won by the democracies. The style of this article was significant, in that it expressed the very prevalent view that there was a wide gap between the Nazi rulers and the German masses (the theory of the "two Germanics").

The reader knows how mistaken were these opinions. Let it once more be emphasised: the "Hitlerization" of Germany at the time of the beginning of, and during, the war was almost total, without much difference of class and sex. We have seen how early and hopelessly, in particular, the mind of the German educated class became infected<sup>2</sup>—and it is hardly necessary to insist that with the passage of time the infection must have gone deeper, as a great proportion of the remnant of courageous and liberal thinkers were dead or living abroad as refugees. On the other hand, the mentality of the working class has often been misconceived as constituting an opposing force. True, the workers had at least offered a certain resistance, in 1932, and many of them were, indeed, less guilty than other classes, for the labourers, more than other citizens, were still suffering from the spiritual after-effects of a prolonged political repression which had weighed upon them with particular severity under the Kaiser; and their fickle attitude towards the advancing Nazis was due, in some degree, to an understandable, though short-sighted, disappointment when the Weimar Republic could not fulfil their exaggerated expectations quickly enough to satisfy them.<sup>3</sup> However, such extenuating circumstances do not alter the fact of the Hitlerization of the workers. Moreover, there are ample symptoms that many of them turned their coats not merely

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 238, 246-248.

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 79, 103-104, 108, 120-121

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 17-19, 23-26, 38, 42-44, 170-173

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for show. This appeared early enough from the composition of the S.A.,<sup>1</sup> and the conclusion was confirmed by the fact that nothing has been heard of any really substantial anti-Nazi movement among the workers.<sup>2</sup> There is, indeed, little reason to suppose that the Nazi philosophy, forcibly inculcated, as it was, into every German, without regard to his position in life, should have failed to gain a hold on at least a large proportion of the working class also. The British Trade Unions, the most important workers' organisations in the U.S.A., and the World Trade Union Conference held in London, 1945, have certainly not without good reasons agreed to the declaration of the organised workers in the Soviet Union, that the German workmen cannot be acquitted of guilt, and must share the collective responsibility of the German people. The Conference of European Socialist Parties, held at the same time, came to a similar conclusion.<sup>3</sup>

Our former statement that the youth of Germany is fully Hitlerized<sup>4</sup> applies to all those who had not yet formed an independent political judgment when Hitler came to power. This means that—making some allowance as regards the younger children—almost the whole German population under thirty-five must be regarded as Nazis. But even among the older German generation—though on the average they may have been less fanatical, and some of them sceptical, or indifferent—the number of those who really detested Nazism was small. Again, the concentration camps, emigration, and the death of many older men and women, have further thinned the ranks of the real adversaries of Nazism, and many a father had—temporarily, at all events—forgotten his former love of freedom and democracy “for his children’s sake.” Eventually, to get a correct impression, one must not lose sight of the fact that the older “anti-Nazis” still include the royalists and the representatives of many other colourings of Prussianism and Pan-Germanism.

One incident is still worthy of mention. There had been, from time to time, rumours of some strange activities on the part of the representatives of extreme wealth in Germany. Before America entered the war it was reliably reported that leading German industrialists had approached their counterparts in the U.S.A. and hinted, in order to make peace proposals more acceptable, that there might be a possibility of “retiring” Hitler, and attributing to him in the future the part of an elder statesman with an itch for writing

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 63-68.

<sup>2</sup>The *Tribune de Genève* reported on August 20th, 1944, the appearance of the first German clandestine newspaper—*Es Stimmt* (“It is true”)—with a wider circulation round Leipzig.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 302-303.

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 66-67, 100, 140, 242-244.

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The report sounded the more credible, as it was entirely characteristic of the German capitalists who had been responsible for financing Hitler, and who, now he had become suspect as to his economic plans for the future, were slyly manoeuvring to rid themselves of the man—or, better still, to sell him at a price; characteristic especially in respect of their obstinate misjudging of the fundamentally altered conditions of internal power in Germany, and the over-valuation of their own “importance.” Now they hoped (and we shall presently touch upon the corresponding efforts of certain circles within the army<sup>1</sup>) that by means of a cunning compromise, to be effected with the help of international capital, Germany could get away with at least part of her booty, and that such a success might be exploited to bring the country back under the domination of its “born rulers.” To this end the quiet disposal of Hitler was a useful preliminary.

It goes without saying that the way of thinking of a selfish little group, which, like the Bourbons, had “learned nothing and forgotten nothing,” had no relation to the mentality of the German people as a whole. More interesting is the fact that the negotiators on the other side of the table were plainly not excessively shocked by the obvious tendency of the proposals, which would have extinguished all future hope of a really peaceful and democratic Germany. The egocentric mentality of extreme wealth is much the same all the world over,<sup>2</sup> but with regard to the German variety we must not lose sight of the fact that, in addition, just that ingredient which we have found to be the essence of Hitler’s movement—a ruthless Pan-Germanism—was always represented by the “captains of industry” in no less a degree, though in a slightly more “cultivated” form, than by the leading Nazi gangsters. Differences of opinion between the “Nazis” in a narrower sense, i.e., the upstarts of Hitler’s inner circle, and the former German “ruling classes,” including the representatives of capitalism, concerned merely economic and social questions. The outbreak of a fraternal strife between these groups, — however desirable it would have been, because it must have accelerated the general disintegration and Germany’s breakdown in the war—would merely have been

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 243

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 243-244, 267, 299-301, 311, and see the statement of M Tixier, Commissioner for Labour in the French Committee for National Liberation, made before the Governing Body of the International Labour Office in London, in December, 1943, that, while small employers were helping the French resistance movement, not one of the representatives of the big employers was among the hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen who were imprisoned by the Germans. Not a few industrialists have been sentenced since the liberation of France was completed, and an unduly large proportion of the exponents of wealth in other liberated countries have clearly shown similar tendencies.



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a struggle between different sections of the German enemies of liberty and democracy. Treating with the capitalist or any other group of the former "ruling classes" would have meant virtually negotiating with the spirit of autocratic Pan-Germanism, whatever the colour behind which this mentality might have been concealed. We shall return, in the last chapter, to the fundamental demand that in the interest of a lasting peace and the re-education of the German people, no future compromise with any exponent of this disastrous mentality is feasible.<sup>1</sup> The German diehards, however, would have had to pay very dearly—as had the conspirers of the Junkers' and officers' caste in 1937, on some other, less advertised, occasions, and again in July, 1944,<sup>2</sup>—if they had ever seriously attempted to remove the Leader.

To judge the background of the present state of mind in Germany, obscured as it is in the chaos after the débâcle, it may still be useful to quote the essence of a summary of Hitlerism and the German war mentality contained in the first version of this book and published in the spring of 1941, at the time of the Russo-German neutrality pact

"Perhaps the mere circumstance that in contemporary Germany there is no longer any visible resistance would not, in itself, be decisive evidence of its complete Nazification. But the popular indifference towards the reckless suppression of all individual freedom and the Rights of Man, since 1933, and the conditions which have now prevailed, for more than seven years, in respect of religion, ethics, and law, compel us to conclude that the German people as a whole, seduced by its 'world-philosophy' and obsessed by Hitlerism, positively enjoys the mephitic atmosphere, or, at least, does not feel it, in any similar degree as the conquered countries obviously do, to be disgusting and intolerable. One cannot argue against this that we should consider the fact that, in spite of his actual slavery, the German has been constantly flattered as one of the 'master-people,' while the citizens of the enslaved countries feel every day anew the sting of being regarded as inferiors. For no decent man, and in particular no Christian, could have taken pleasure in this pretended racial superiority. We must clearly perceive that we have to deal with a people whose feeble power of thinking for themselves is completely paralysed by propaganda, so that they have believed, in turn, according to Hitler's changing demands, in a Jewish-Bolshevist blood-tyranny and in a pact of friendship with Russia, and they were persuaded that the Western Powers had aimed for years, in secret, at the encirclement, strangulation, and dismemberment of Germany.

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 211-212, 299-301, 322-324

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 243

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Skilfully terrified by a nightmare of the fate awaiting Germany if Nazism were ever defeated, there are many now who would prefer a kind of Nazi-Bolshevism,<sup>1</sup> however vaguely envisaged, to a British victory. But they could just as easily be led into war against Russia, if the new friendship should break down again one day, at or against Hitler's desire. It is just a total, fanatical, mental derangement of the masses, and all reports of apathy and war weariness should be treated with great reserve. Not all the cohorts of Hitler's Praetorian Guards, or of the Gestapo, could have defeated a revolution if it had been really desired and resolutely carried out by the bulk of the German people. The Germans did not even need to wait until the war had given them arms. As their great poet declared more than a hundred years ago: 'No power on earth could prevent a morally sound people from shaking off an oppressor and fetching their eternal rights from the heavens.' But—did anything happen even when the Germans had the weapons? Anyone who understood the German mind could safely predict that the successes of the *Blitzkrieg* were bound to strengthen the faith in the 'superior leadership and magic personality of Hitler' to such a degree that the wildest plans for world domination would be triumphantly accepted. To restore reason in Germany demands total victory; and even then it will not be an easy matter. He who expects a revolution against Nazism before Germany's position in the war is severely jeopardized will suffer a grievous disappointment. The opportunist masses of the German people will not free themselves from their supreme opportunist until an irreparable defeat or an economic breakdown and actual starvation have proved the futility of the German dogma of their invincibility."

Events since 1941 have confirmed this summary diagnosis. As regards an early economic disaster, there was never any good reason for banking on it. Indeed, the German mentality provided a strong foundation for our simultaneous warning, in contradiction to hasty prophecies, that there would be plenty to be squeezed out of the enslaved peoples; a warning which was soon confirmed by Goering's cynical, but — in more than one sense — true assertion that the Germans would be the last people to go hungry. The industrial collapse was only brought about by the final bombing campaign immediately preceding the invasion. American internees who were released at the end of 1944 have affirmed that the general German food situation was even then by no means bad; and when the Allied soldiers entered Germany they had the opportunity of comparing the outward shape of the well-fed and clad German citizens with that

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 181-185, 280.

<sup>2</sup>Schiller in *Wilhelm Tell*.

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of the liberated prisoners of war, the foreign slave workers, and the starving inmates of the concentration camps. Incidentally, they could see also with their own eyes that the depressed mood of the German population was only due to the defeat, with all its consequences, but not to any sense of guilt.

After the beginning of the German débâcle on the Eastern front, and, especially, in France, there was again an abundance of more or less intelligent, and often rather detailed, prophecies of imminent political disturbances in Germany. Most of these predictions were based on the assumption that, when the enemy knocked at the door of the "fatherland," the German people was rapidly going to be "demesmerised," and that the German masses, though still kept together by terrorism, espionage, and the "cohesive instincts of hereditary discipline," would not follow the mad parole of the Nazi bosses, to continue the struggle to the last ditch, and thereby mutilate the whole country and their own future. Other writers expected that an "immediate bloody revolt" of the ten millions of foreign workers would help to overthrow the Nazi régime. Of course, there was a certain truth in these and similar reflections. One would, indeed, have thought that the belief in German invincibility must have severely suffered since Europe had been successfully invaded. But it appeared that still in the beginning of 1944 a *levée en masse* could be put into operation by the Nazis, a measure which the German rulers in 1918 had not dared to order. Even an appeal made by the S.S. to crippled and disabled persons, unfit for service in the *Volksturm*, to volunteer for suicide exploits, "thus saving more valuable lives of sound Germans," met with a certain success; and substantial revolts of foreign workers—among whom, incidentally, the "anti-Bolshevists" of the Vlassov group,<sup>1</sup> and other "collaborationists" must not be fully overlooked—did not materialise until the war ended. At all events, the fact that Hitler remained at the helm almost till the very last moment, proves clearly enough that there had never been any real hope of achieving a short cut—particularly not by an improved campaign of "elucidating psychological warfare."

Unfortunately, Goebbels' propaganda had succeeded in persuading even a great part of those Germans who did not belong to the intrinsic Nazi conglomeration that it would be the best course for them to stand together till the end, because it was "the real aim of the united Anglo-Saxons, Jews, and Bolshevists, not merely to destroy Nazism but the very future of Germany itself." Only people who were not sufficiently conversant with the methods of Nazi agitation

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 172-173

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and with the German mentality could believe that this sort of propaganda would have altered, or have been less effective, if Goebbels had not been able to point to the Allied demand for "unconditional surrender." Already a year before this postulate was vigorously placed on record at Casablanca, the first edition of this book had pointed out—when dealing with the stupidity of appeasers who were afraid that plain speaking might "unnecessarily strengthen the unity of the Germans and excite Hitler's adherents to still greater fury"—that soft-peddalling during the war would produce an effect in the Teutons precisely opposite to that desired. German adversaries of Pan-Germanism could not be surprised by the impressive formula which, while clearly expressing that all those conditions would be imposed which might prove necessary to achieve the ulterior ends of this crusade, by no means indicated the intention of "destroying and enslaving" Germany, a formula which, at the same time, constituted a well-attuned antidote to the truculent Nazi mentality yet prevailing when the demand of Casablanca was issued. German anti-Nazis must have been well aware of the material reasons, to be mentioned in another context,<sup>1</sup> why the armistice had to be a plain dictate. Indeed, most of the heavy criticism, which the postulate of "unconditional surrender" here and there evoked, was not caused by the strictness of the formula itself, but by the uneasy feeling that nobody exactly knew what it implied; and, merely for the sake of clearness, a simultaneous explanation as to what it was intended to do with the defeated Germany would, of course, have been desirable. But it is rather difficult to see how such a statement should have taken the edge off the Nazi propaganda or have evoked a popular German demand to put an end to the struggle. For—whatever one may think as to where the new German frontiers should be drawn, particularly in the East—no declaration on the intended treatment of Germany could have concealed the fact that the cession of considerable parts of German soil would be demanded—and the furious German reaction when this fact first became known by Mr. Churchill's declaration in the House of Commons, on January 18th, 1945, and again when the communiqué on the Crimea Conference was published, was significant enough. Moreover, in the absence of a perfectly cut-and-dried Allied peace plan, any precipitate declaration would have suffered from the inherent weakness of all generalities; and it would also have involved the risk that we might be blamed, at some future time, with having deceived the Germans, as they complained that they were deceived by President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Thus little more could really be done

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 283-284.

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than to state—as Mr. Churchill did state in his aforesaid speech in the House of Commons and as was confirmed by the joint Allied declaration after the Crimea Conference — that “it is not our purpose to destroy the people of Germany.” This, together with the hint that “only when Nazism and militarism have been extirpated . . . there will be a place for Germany in the comity of nations,” could not be attractive to Pan-Germanists; but it may well have helped to strengthen the moral position of the small fraction of really decent Germans who constitute the slender nucleus upon which our hope of building the Germany of the future must be based.

We shall add in the closing chapter a few remarks on the developments which might be expected in the future. But it may be anticipated here that even the most complete breakdown after the surrender must by no means yet be taken as a sign of incipient repentance, but merely as an opportunity to make a start with the great task of re-education

## II

### THE FORCES

There has been much conjecture, before and during the World War, as to the political attitude of the German forces. Most of it was guesswork based on observations and experiences of the former Imperial Army and its officers' corps. Conclusions were drawn from the part played by the German officers in the events in and after 1918,<sup>1</sup> and predictions made as to coming developments within the German “army” when Hitler's star should near its setting. None of these prophecies could be taken very seriously. But, with respect to our past experiences and the general military-mindedness of the German people as a whole, the mentality of the former German forces continues to demand our attention, notwithstanding the demilitarisation of Germany.

Above all: when the World War started, there was no longer a close, homogeneous, and powerful body of generals, such as in the Imperial Germany had exercised, more or less secretly, a highly efficient influence upon politics. The privileged exclusiveness and solidarity of the Prussian officers' corps as a whole has been persistently diluted under the Nazi régime. The professional *Reichswehr* which after the Great War had been built up and educated, still in the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 25-26, 28, 32-35, 42-43, 61-65, 145-148

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old traditions, under General von Seeckt, formed only a numerically insignificant — though militarily important — part of Hitler's new forces. True, a large number of ex-officers who had served under the Kaiser re-entered the forces after 1933, and efforts were made by some of them to revive the old social and political traditions. There was a period, before 1939, when it was thought that a growing monarchist movement in the new army might become dangerous to the Nazis. However, though the percentage of the officers involved in the various pre-war conspiracies has never been ascertained, it seems that the number was far smaller than had been believed. Even among the senior officers there were many who, during the period of Weimar, had become stout followers of Hitler, and already it was rather doubtful whether the sporadic high-ranking supporters of the monarchist movement would have been able to carry with them even a substantial proportion of the officers of those units which they themselves commanded — not to speak of the N.C.O.s and the men. For the bulk of the officers and men venerated Hitler as the "Re-creator of Reich and Heer," and the junior members of the thoroughly rejuvenated officers' corps were already fully broken in to "Hitlerism." The betrayal of several royalist conspiracies in 1934, and again in 1937-38, led to the liquidation of many "unreliable" officers, and the replenishment of the army with tested Nazis was accelerated. Already, in another context, we have stressed the point that one of Hitler's earliest master-strokes was to make the rank of officer in his private guards accessible to anyone who was politically "reliable," without regard to social position, descent, or education. Since the "seizure of power" new regulations had assimilated the commissioning of officers in all army units to the same principle. Many S.S. officers also had been infiltrated gradually into the regular army. Since the beginning of the war, units of the "Waffen SS" formed a substantial part of the fighting forces, and the principle of leavening the body of officers in every single unit with reliable Nazis was methodically applied. It came to its height in the summer of 1944, when, after the attempt on Hitler's life, a new careful purge and "rejuvenation" of the whole officers' corps was carried through; many army groups in the field got S.S. generals as their commanders, and all army contingents on German soil were put under the High Command of the "Reichsführer S.S.," Himmler.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, it must be taken for granted that the traditional way of regarding the German army officers in the World War as a closely knit and homogeneous body of social equals was out of date.

The slackening of the internal solidarity and powers of resist-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 64, 139

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ance of a formerly stiff-necked officers' corps, jealously watching over its traditional prerogatives, had already become visible when Hindenburg reluctantly put up with Goering's enforced promotion from captain to general—an affront to tradition without precedent in the Prussian army<sup>1</sup>—and when the new general could, at once, and with impunity, start both his campaigns of personal enrichment and of collecting all sorts of medals and distinctions, and flaunt in colourful uniforms of his own design; and also when, without any opposition, Hitler took over, in peace time, the supreme military command.<sup>2</sup> The undermining of the old solidarity became more obvious when, as early as 1934, at a time when the infiltration of the army with Nazi elements had not yet made any great progress, the officers appeared to be unmoved when their commander-in-chief, Schleicher, was killed by Goering's bravos, on the occasion of the Röhm putsch; when in 1937-38 they quietly accepted the mass-shooting of their royalist comrades, and when, during the Polish campaign, another famous former commander-in-chief, von Fritsch, and after him many other high-ranking officers, suddenly "disappeared." The passivity of the military at the disgraceful treatment of the generals who had been connected with the abortive attempt on Hitler's life, in July, 1944,<sup>3</sup> confirmed the observation that the anti-Nazi plotters—most of them belonging to the old officers' caste, or some other section of the former privileged classes — formed merely a comparatively small separate body within the new officers' corps, but were by no means representative of the spirit of the corps as a whole. The members of this clique themselves had clearly overestimated their power and influence in the forces, just as the corresponding civilian group had done in their own sphere.<sup>4</sup> If, under the impression of a deteriorating military situation, some officers were moved to speak of the "traditions" of their more pleasant past, or if they suddenly remembered their "better military judgment," and if they tried to rid themselves of "this man Hitler," who was not an "equal" but, *au fond*, a usurper, whose social conceptions were no less alien to their own than were his personal antecedents—such reflections had nothing to do with a supposed general officers' mentality, and still less with a general "army-mentality." They were class-reactions, pure and

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 43

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 201.

<sup>3</sup>It had been a rather mixed company, indeed. Some of the leading plotters, such as the fatal Count Helldorf (cf. p 163) and certain SS officers, were simply malcontents of the Nazi band itself, and typical exponents of the Gestapo mentality. Others were personally respectable men—though assuredly no democrats. It must be kept in mind that all of them, including the head of the putsch, Dr. Gerdeler, had previously accepted appointments under Hitler.

<sup>4</sup>Cf p. 235.

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simple, of just the same nature as the attitude of the civilian diehards, which we have observed in another context.<sup>1</sup> Many earlier signs had indicated that the traditional political influence of high-ranking aristocratic generals had evaporated—for example, when Hitler, under the pact with Russia, coolly sacrificed the Baltic nobility,<sup>2</sup> so closely connected with the Prussian Junkers. Nevertheless, even in 1944, a letter to *The Times*—which deserves to be mentioned because it is typical of the wrong way in which this problem was often approached—tried to draw far-fetched conclusions as to an existing anti-Nazi mentality in the German Wehrmacht from the fact that—ten years ago—Rohm's plan of incorporating the S.A. units into the Reichswehr of those days was turned down by General von Schleicher.<sup>3</sup> In fact, there had been very obvious military reasons why Schleicher had opposed that idea, though he was by no means on principle opposed to the Hitler guards.<sup>4</sup> To incorporate hundreds of half-baked "political soldiers" into the small, but very highly-trained professional crack army of those days would have meant, indeed, reducing to nil, at least for the time being, its military efficiency and readiness. But, even apart from this, what had the political enlistment of the then commander-in-chief, or perhaps, a more or less substantial proportion of the officers of the former Reichswehr, to do with the mentality of the gigantic Wehrmacht, raised by universal conscription?

What has been said of the disappearance of a special "army mentality" (in the former sense of the term) of the officers' corps applies in a still higher degree to the N.C.O.s and the men, who had grown up in the new spirit. A few reports of clashes between regular soldiers and men of the SS units, or occasional observations of differences in their behaviour towards the population of the conquered countries, proved very little. Minor animosities had always existed between different units of the German forces, and it was quite natural, with regard to the composition of the Waffen S.S. of picked Nazi volunteers, and in view of their many privileges, if such jealousies increased, and, for once in a way, led to encounters. It was only too clear, on the other hand, that the super-Nazis of the S.S. would show their extreme brutality to the "inferior" inhabitants of the enslaved countries. But the fact that in the forces, just as in the civilian population, the Hitler guards and Party members enjoyed a privileged position, and excelled in Gestapo-mentality, says nothing as to the question whether a specific

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 236.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>*The Times*, April 12th, 1944.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 42.



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army-mentality distinguished the German soldiers as a whole from the rest of the population. The facts point in the opposite direction; and bold statements of "observers" to the effect that "a few weeks of ordinary army-training at the hands of a Prussian drill-sergeant had usually been enough to expel the Nazi ideas from the minds of the recruits" were entirely misleading. The Prussian drill-sergeant has for long been a good Nazi himself.

It was the social closeness of the officers' corps, on the one hand, the repression of the N.C.O.s and men into utter submissiveness, on the other, which once had made the Prussian army an unpolitical and almost unshakable rock in the hands of a few commanding generals. It is obvious that the dilution of the officers' caste, and Hitler's new methods of education,<sup>1</sup> were bound—and intended—to produce a different effect in this respect. The strong military structure and discipline had not suffered, nor had the traditional respect of the civilian population for an officer's uniform been diminished by the passing of the social homogeneity and exclusiveness of the corps.<sup>2</sup> But the "army mentality," in the old sense of something completely aloof from the civilian way of thinking, had gone, and the new collective boastfulness was no equivalent. The army of this war was no longer a State within the State. It had been educated into Nazism, was led by officers of whom an overwhelming majority were Nazis, and Hitler's assertion, in a speech of November, 1941, that "the task of inspiring the army with the spirit of Nazism had been attained to the full," was then already substantially in accordance with the truth. Thence this evolution made rapid progress by the incorporation, as integral parts of the army, of numerous divisions of "Volksgrenadiers." This and the calling up of the "Volksturm" led logically to the removal of the last bulwark that so far had safeguarded a certain independence of the commanding officers from the interference of the Party authorities: In October, 1944, a new statute on the "Amalgamation of Party and Army" abolished the fundamental principle of the former "Law regarding Military Service"—the principle that the Party membership of a man was suspended pending his active service. Under the new statute the Party and its para-organisations, which so far had been confined to the watching of the civilian authorities, became entitled to extend their activities to the forces, including the formations in the field. To mark the "Fusion of Party and Army," even the traditional form of military salute was replaced by the Hitler salute—without the slightest sign of opposition. It appears fairly obvious, after all this,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 147-148.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 10, 11, 15, 73, 78

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp. 138-139.

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that what some writers erringly regarded as a specific—supposedly anti-Nazi—"army mentality," was merely the mentality of the afore-said separate group of officers belonging to the former officers' aristocracy.

Many spontaneous utterances of prisoners of war from the German army, navy, and Luftwaffe confirm the fact that the armed forces of the "Third Reich," in all ranks, reflected pretty closely the mentality of the various social strata of the wholly Nazi-fied German people as a whole. One should, perhaps, have had misgivings when prisoners of war occasionally hastened to assert their hatred of Nazism; but there is no reason to doubt the genuineness of feelings such as were recorded, in the fifth year of the war, by an experienced British army chaplain who had made certain investigations on his own account. He reported that in his "conversations with German prisoners none has expressed any anger with Hitler, or given any sign of a sense of guilt", and he added "When I said 'What a terrible fate Hitler has brought on the nation mad enough to follow him,' it was received in a kind of numbed way, as if it were a new idea" As regards, in particular, Germany's military youth, there can be no doubt that up to the very end of the war they thought entirely on Nazi lines. When questioned about the contents of their "world-philosophy," their customary answer remained. "Heil Hitler!"

Of course, there was in the forces, as in the civilian population, a certain, numerically incalculable, minority which was, for the most varied reasons, opposed to the Nazi system and the Leader. There were monarchists and communists, and even some democrats; but there was never a compact and really dangerous political opposition against the Hitler system in the officers' corps as a whole, or among the rank and file of the forces. Forecasts—repeated with a certain regularity in foreign newspapers on the occasion of German setbacks—that "influential military circles were preparing to take over," so far as they were not mere wishful fancies, were inspired by the afore-said conspiracies of a particular group of officers who were neither democrats nor in any disagreement with Pan-Germanist "ideals." All these prophecies were utterly unfounded in so far as they tended to indicate that a political army revolt was imminent, supported by a majority, or, at all events by a strong vertical cross-section, of officers and men.

Earlier in the war some of those who expected an army revolt before Germany's power of resistance was definitely broken had argued that there was nothing in the relations of the officers to

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 55, 66, 67, 229-231, 237-239

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Hitler comparable to the close personal contact between the Hohenzollerns and the officers of the former Prussian army. Against this the first version of this book already pointed to the fact that experience gained at the end of the previous war had shown that such arguments did not lead very far. Apart from this, we had only to remember Napoleon's guards, to realize that there was no good reason to suppose that Hitlerism must necessarily prove a less strong link than monarchism.

It is assuredly not because "we told you this four years ago"—it is merely to prove the practical usefulness of a thorough investigation of the German mentality that once more we beg leave to quote certain conclusions reached in the prior edition of this book. We warned readers that it was foolish to expect a revolt of the German army under its officers—"even if differences between the Fascists and the Italian army might lead, one day, to the collapse of Mussolini," and we pointed out that there was no reason to suppose that "Hitlerism had infected the officers less deeply than the rank and file of the army, or that in the forces rather than in the civilian population the conviction would gain ground that a higher moral duty demanded the overturning of the dishonest régime of a tyrant whose personality, mentality, and execrable actions had deeply injured the inner honour of the nation, and, indeed, of every individual German." We pointed to the fact that already the sanguine hopes of those optimists, in Germany itself and in other countries, had been bitterly disappointed, who once had believed in vague assertions that the Germans would support a new war only until they had to face the enemy, and that many thousands of German soldiers had even been waiting for the right moment to use their arms in a way not specified in the regulations; or that, at all events, they would not fight stubbornly "against an opponent whose ideology was in fact their own (!)"—a kind of wishful thinking very similar to that indulged in by those who had believed that a revolution would break out in Germany on the very day when the Germans "had weapons in their hands"<sup>1</sup> Eventually, we had to contradict also the then often heard opinion that the lack of religion and inner values would make the German youth unequal to a hard, prolonged fight, and to point to the fact that "even barbarians have done well in former wars."

If further evidence was required of the mentality which, right to the end of the war, was still predominant among the German officers, it could be found in the utterances to British war correspondents of some high-ranking German prisoners of war in Russian hands—the Russians being less reticent than the British military authorities in

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 238

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allowing such interviews. The German generals and colonels, depressed as they were, admitted freely the blunders of their High Command, while they still continued to believe in Hitler and his policy, and while their ethical attitude, as regards the German acts of aggression and horror, corresponded exactly to that which the army chaplain had observed in German prisoners of "other ranks." Indeed, it would have been a bold supposition to think that their personal mishap should have made such hard-boiled Pan-Germanists truly repentant. The manifestos over the Russian wireless, of the captured German generals, proved hardly anything more than that the speakers were prepared to draw all those practical conclusions, which opportunism demanded, from their conviction that Germany had definitely lost the war. On the other hand, the inefficacy, even at that late stage of the war, of their appeal to the German forces to overthrow Hitler, and to give up the suicidal struggle, was significant of the substantial difference which inevitably exists between the considerations of prisoners of war and the sentiments of soldiers still in the field. What made the German officers and men cling to their oath of allegiance to Hitler until the very end, was not merely the close grip of the Gestapo. It was even something more than the manifold psychic inhibitions which commonly prevent a soldier from mutinying, especially in war-time. It was the persisting spell of Hitlerism. If we want to obtain a correct impression of the mentality of the German forces we must not, of course, judge from the bewildered state of mind which began to show itself among the troops, as in the civilian population, when the final débâcle had begun. Before this stage was reached, it appeared rather unlikely, indeed, that "Nazi opponents" within the officers' corps would, once more, take the personal risk and the responsibility of provoking a serious split in the forces and the people, this all the more as they were aware how deeply Hitler's followers were still entrenched, not only in the whole administration but also in a great proportion of the economy of the country.<sup>1</sup> Apart from this, it could hardly be assumed that the "anti-Nazi" generals who, at that time, were fully informed that nothing but "unconditional surrender" could end the war, would be eager, by precipitately overthrowing Hitler, to renounce a valuable opportunity of throwing, at a later time, the full blame of the defeat upon the Nazis and the "intuitions of the Highest War Lord."

Notwithstanding the signing of the declaration of "unconditional surrender" by the German High Command, an attempt to restore the "prestige" of the army will certainly be made, sooner or later; and its significance as a symptom should not be underestimated, even though there is no German army any more. We have to face the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 276-277.

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fact that the great question, whether there will be another peaceful and democratic Germany in the future, is very narrowly bound up with the problem of a really peaceable evolution of the outer world, to which we have to return in the closing chapter of this book.<sup>1</sup> As it would be difficult, this time, to follow the pattern used after 1918, and to ascribe the inglorious end of the war to the devilish activities of Jews and Marxists, it will be attempted, in all probability, to exonerate the army at the expense of the Hitler fanatics. Dr Ley's furious outburst on "blue-blooded generals stabbing Germany in the back"—immediately after the officers' conspiracy of July, 1944—may be regarded as a precipitate effort to forestall this by means of turning the tables. To us, indeed, it makes no great difference upon which of these two parties the Germans, rightly or wrongly, may eventually lay the blame for the loss of the war. Nor could an uninitiated person judge — at any rate in present circumstances — to what a degree the individual military setbacks and Germany's final defeat were actually due to Hitler's personal incompetence and to his obstinate insistence on his faulty "intuitions" against the considered opinions of the General Staff. We are much more concerned, within the scope of this book, with the question of the responsibility of the "army" (this time in the sense of the whole officers' corps) for the initiation of the war

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In the beginning of his career as a dictator, Hitler had sometimes brusquely rebuffed and overruled the professional soldiers.<sup>2</sup> But presently his "bloodless" successes had not only won him the faith of the masses, who hopefully looked to him for military as well as political guidance, but had also hypnotised the military commanders to such an extent that henceforth most of them willingly complied with all his decisions. This remained unchanged, at least during the first years of the war, though already at that time Hitler's opportunistic blend of politics and strategy was often, and obviously enough, influenced by his interest in the maintenance of his personal prestige and power. The supremacy of the Leader was always unconditionally accepted by the generals—even at the most critical stages. One of these tests came immediately after the beginning of the war: It has been alleged that, before the invasion of Poland, and with the Russian problem still in abeyance, Hitler promised the generals that he would not yet let matters come to a war against the Western Powers. Whether that assertion was literally true or not, many things suggest that not only the generals, but Hitler also had severe

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 268-275

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 201

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misgivings when the unexpected happened,<sup>1</sup> and Germany, perfectly ready only for the planned descent on Poland, was suddenly faced with her old nightmare, a fight against East and West. The apprehension in the leading circles was unequivocally revealed by the immediately following "peace offensive," while a wave of uneasiness, like that of the days of Munich,<sup>2</sup> swept over the country, which had been confident that Hitler would effect the conquest of Poland again almost without bloodshed. The German generals, however, failed to use this unique opportunity of overthrowing the whole Nazi régime, sparing this generation the terrors of a world war, and saving their Fatherland from disaster. They yielded to Hitler. It may well be that they even felt relieved when he took over the supreme active command, and thereby the full military responsibility. The inner reason for their behaviour is fairly clear. If ever there were differences of opinion between the Leader and the generals, they concerned problems of strategy and tactics, or the question of the best moment to attack—and, at a later stage, to retreat—mere technical divergencies of views which, however serious, were of secondary importance. They could never justify, in the opinion of most of the army chiefs, the resolution to abandon the enormous "asset" of possessing a "Highest War Lord" in whose leadership and intuition the faith of the people was so evidently centred, and with whom the generals were in full agreement as to all the major political and military aims and the means of achieving them. It is this deep spiritual concurrence of Hitler and the generals, the identity of their belief in the Pan-Germanist world-philosophy, which constitutes the crux of this matter.

It is obvious that the devoting, during the six years from 1933 to 1939, of all the economic resources and other powers of Germany to the one all-important purpose of preparing for a predatory assault, was not merely the work of the megalomaniac and the upstarts of his entourage. The manner in which this grandiose enterprise was prepared and carried into effect without any regard to the inevitable destruction of the whole German peace economy, and with the clear realisation that there could be no retreat,<sup>3</sup> leaves us in no doubt that the men in command of the German armed forces—like the leaders of the *Reichsbank* and the majority of the captains of industry—were partakers in the plot from the very beginning; and it is by no means merely of symbolic importance that not only are the representatives of the German army, navy, and air force among the first twenty-four German leaders accused of war crimes, but that the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 221-226

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 153-154.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 158-160, 187-189

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United Nations Indictment names the "General Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces" as one of those organisations which are to be declared "criminal" by the International Military Tribunal.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say that, even by overthrowing Hitler, at the end of a lost war, the army leaders would not have been absolved from the criminal co-responsibility for the world disaster; as little as the industrialist helpers and abettors would be exonerated, if Himmler's assertion were true that some of them tried to withhold certain raw materials from war production in order to save them for a still more profitable use in the reconstruction of their post-war trade. Nor would a successful generals' revolt have meant anything more to us than a step on the way to the gradual disintegration of the unholy German conglomeration. For, as indicated before, any developments of such a kind would not have proved any essential change of mind. Even if in some individual cases the Russian efforts to enlighten the captured German officers should have met with more than a merely practical and outward success, the initiated would remain suspicious as to the genuine convertibility at any rate of the bulk of those, who spent a long time, and attained a higher rank, in the German forces. Thus any hope that members of the former German military caste could be relied on as helpers in the task of building another Germany would be idle — notwithstanding their sometimes expressed "anti-Nazi sentiments." All that we are up against, the gist of the "world-philosophy" as explained in previous chapters—intolerance, illiberalism, oppression, false heroism, and the right of the stronger—was always implicit in the militarism, the chauvinist Pan-Germanism, the Prussianism, of the German officers' caste. Social or economic differences of opinion, monarchist or other tendencies, which perhaps divided the generals, like other members of the ruling classes, *inter se*, or from the Nazi masters of Germany, did not alter the fact that they were all equally the exponents of one and the same evil spirit, that characteristic mentality of Fascism, Nazism, or whatever variety of autocratic chauvinism, which, as the well-known Italian anti-Fascist, Dr. Croce, has once and again explained, constitutes the very antithesis of the principles of liberty and morality.<sup>2</sup>

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An abstract of the mentality of the German forces would be

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 256, 308

<sup>2</sup>The former Russian formula, which declared that only "Hitlerite" Germany was the foe, was obviously not comprehensive enough, although no doubt it was intended to include the whole of the aggressive-minded Pan-Germanists. The Franco-Russian mutual aid pact mentioned for the first time, "the Hitlerite Government or any other Government or authority set up in Germany with the aim of prolonging or nourishing a policy of aggression."

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incomplete without briefly examining the "Gestapo-mentality"—the essence of the true Nazi spirit<sup>1</sup> — with which particularly the officers are so deeply imbued. It is all the more necessary to stress this point, as immediately after the end of hostilities attempts were made<sup>2</sup> — and they will be pursued with increasing energy in the course of time—to whitewash the "army" and to sever it from the misdeeds of the SS troops and the Gestapo, and from the "Nazis" altogether. Both the primary components of the Gestapo mentality—reckless brutality and utter falsity—appeared, to those who knew these men, to be personified by many leading German officers. The falsity and ambition, combined with servility, for instance, of Hitler's right-hand man, General Keitel, were already known among his school-fellows, of whom the writer was one, they earned him the significant nickname *Lackeitel* (lackey). This indicates the qualifications which were indispensable in an officer who hoped to rise to the highest rank in Hitler's forces. But apart from the personal, there is ample material evidence that the Gestapo mentality had permeated the whole fabric of the German armed forces in no less a degree than the other sections of the Nazi hierarchy.

The German army has always literally kept faith with the slogan that every means is allowed in war-time, and, whether Prussian, Bavarian, or other German "warriors" were in question, the savagery and unscrupulousness of their war upon civilians is sufficiently attested by history. The bestialities committed against the so-called "franc-tireurs" of 1870-71 were still remembered in France when the Great War brought a repetition of those evil things at Dinant and elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and this was followed by the deportations of workmen from Belgium, and the sinking of passenger ships. It is a familiar truth that since then cruelty has been developed into a scientific system by the German army leaders. In 1936, the "theory of total warfare" jointly discovered by General von Bernhardi and Hitler's war-theorist, Professor Banse, was published in an essay appearing in the official weekly periodical of the German War Office, *Die Wehrmacht*. It explained unequivocally that unrestricted brutality would be the characteristic of the next war, a brutality far exceeding anything ever known before, with the use of terror against the civil population as a weapon of war, "to break moral resistance." This again was not a substantially new idea to the Germans. It was in fact a revival of German methods of great antiquity, applied as early as the conquest of Prussia by the German knights (*Deutschritter*), and similar means had been used again by Bismarck against the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 136-138

<sup>2</sup>Cf the pronouncements over the Flensburg wireless in May, 1945

<sup>3</sup>Cf the report of the Bryce Committee.



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Poles But now, officially proclaimed, it meant the arbitrary repudiation of most of the international agreements and regulations of the Geneva Convention, laboriously created, during several generations, by the common effort of the humanitarian organisations and the leading philanthropists of all civilised peoples. It stipulated for the first time, quite openly, the application in modern warfare of the terror methods of the Gestapo. The fact that the principles of "total warfare" were accepted by the whole German officers' corps as a matter of course, without even theoretical or literary criticism—which would have been quite possible at that time—exposes the mentality, not only of those who first revived this barbarous and atavistic system, the generals who ordered its application, the underlings who carried out, in cold blood, the dreadful "rehearsals" at Guernica and elsewhere in Spain, but also of all the commanders, N.C.O.s and soldiers, who were methodically imbued with the "new spirit," and who henceforth employed the methods of terror on a grand scale, from Holland to the Balkans and Russia. The bombing of targets of military value, even where the destruction of civilian life on a large scale, or of irretrievable monuments of art, was a foreseeable consequence, was, unfortunately enough, forced by Germany upon our own air force; and it would be futile to deny that the use of the atomic bomb eventually meant the adoption of a practice which never would have been applied if our enemies had played the game. But even so one has only to put the question whether it would be possible, by the most skilful process of "inuring," to induce an average British soldier to fire upon survivors of a torpedoed ship struggling in the water,<sup>1</sup> or overrun with tanks fugitive women and children fleeing along the roads, in order to demonstrate the distinguishing trait of the German soldier.<sup>2</sup> It was Ludendorff who expressed his regret that "the regard for Christian morality had prevented the Imperial army from waging the Great War unhampered by scruples." It was Hitler who stated on one of the rare occasions when he was frank: "My advantage over the democracies is my perfect freedom from moral or sentimental considerations in politics and war."

Observers who endeavoured to contrast the German "army mentality" with that of the Nazis had first and foremost the officers in mind. Unlike more experienced investigators, who had long regarded arrogance and that "false heroism," which we have described, in some detail, in another context<sup>3</sup> as the most striking characteristics of the German officers, these people relied on a

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<sup>1</sup>Cf the case of the "Peleus"

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 141-142

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 144-146, 149.

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self-description which, above all, threw the "straightforwardness" of a Prussian officer into relief. Whether or not such straightforwardness might once have existed, the permeation of the army with Nazi elements and the education in the Nazi spirit have exercised such a decomposing influence that finally, at all events, the typical crooked mentality of Nazism had completely superseded that admirable state of mind.<sup>1</sup> It is worth our while to dwell for a moment upon this rather instructive subject, and briefly to recall a few facts, out of many, which illustrate the real mentality of the highest German officers, and also confirm the opinion of experts with a true inside knowledge that, particularly as regards "straightforwardness," the spirit of the former officers' caste as a whole was not so very different from that in which the latest generation of officers has been educated. Already, the sinking of the "Athenia," and the perfidious insinuation that it was the work of the British Navy—designed to provoke discord between the U.S.A. and Germany—clearly pointed to collusion between Goebbels and the German Admiralty. The fatal cable with which, before America's entry into the war, the then German Chief Admiral, von Raeder, "warned" the U.S.A. Navy of the "imminent" sinking of an American liner by a British submarine, and the repetition of the same manoeuvre on the return home of U.S.A. citizens in June, 1940, showed precisely the same underlying mentality; and all three events remind us of similar attempts which were made during the Great War. No less striking is the similarity of the ignominious lie of the German High Command, that unarmed German sailors of the "Altmark" had been murdered with British hand-grenades, with the analogous slander in the so-called "Baralong incident" in the last war. The habit of the German military authorities of "justifying" in advance intended atrocities by disguising them as acts of retaliation is likewise significant; its close relationship to the corresponding methods of the Nazis in diplomacy and economy<sup>2</sup> is unmistakable; and again it is interesting to point to a rehearsal during the Spanish War—the "retaliatory" bombardment of the ill-fated open towns of Almeria. But the prolonged and furious disavowal of the whole Spanish Expedition itself is even better evidence.<sup>3</sup>

The extent to which the outer world had gradually become enlightened as to the "transvaluated" straightforwardness<sup>4</sup> of the German High Command is in itself significant. Whenever the question of a German assault on a small country was discussed, it was accepted as a truism that no scruples would disturb the noble harmony

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 101, 138

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp 213-216

<sup>3</sup>Cf p 156.

<sup>4</sup>Cf p 57

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between the Leader and his generals—and, indeed, the German people as a whole—in the matter-of-course conviction that the problem was merely one of German expediency, and that it should be decided entirely without reference either to "ethical sentiments" or to the Law of Nations. When, in 1940, before the "Blitz" on London started, the German authorities suddenly asserted that undefended German towns and villages had been attacked by British bombers, everybody asked himself for what new baseness a pretext had to be prepared. The flying bombs and other "secret weapons" were all, of course, applied "in retaliation", and the world would have found it quite in harmony with the mentality of the German military leaders if—convention or no convention—they had used poison gas—provided that the risk of counter-measures appeared not too great. In fact, when the British troops entered Germany, they found great quantities of a new gas more deadly than anything yet known.

In the field of the "war of nerves," the manacling of British war prisoners after the attack on Dieppe—a measure which, *prima facie*, seemed to be incomprehensible—gives a good illustration of the way in which this crooked mentality has worked in military practice.<sup>1</sup> The German generals were obviously prepared to expose their own captured men, as being of no further military value, to counter-measures which they may have anticipated—quite correctly owing to the "weaker" mentality of Germany's Western enemies—would not be too severe. Thus, they attempted, by way of the cruel treatment of the captured men of British commandos, to intimidate Allied parachutists, etc. This system was thenceforth further developed, as was shown by the shameless murder of numerous captured Allied airmen "while escaping." Meanwhile alarming reports as to Allied counter-measures could still be exploited to induce German soldiers to fight to the death.

The most striking demonstration of the Gestapo mentality of the German forces is to be found, however, in the innumerable acts of terror committed by the military administration in the conquered countries. During the Great War the German military authorities had, by illegal recruiting, especially in the occupied Polish districts, competed in the violation of international law with the activities of the German civilian administration, which then deported large numbers of the population for forced labour inside Germany. We have already in other contexts pointed to the much more extensive forcible recruitments of Poles and Russians for the German forces, in this war, and to the wholesale deportations of foreign working slaves.<sup>2</sup> But this time it was the German *Military* Commandant of Belgium who, by

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p. 97, 172-173, 193.

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various orders issued in 1942, inaugurated forced labour for men and women. Everywhere the streets were blocked, every house was searched, and, as the official report in the White Book on "Punishment for War Crimes" put it, "veritable slave raids were carried out in the stations, trams, cafés, cinemas, and public places," while the same thing, a little later, occurred in Holland

We may refrain here from quoting further particulars of the revolting outrages committed by German troops, which are now common knowledge. But the disgrace was by no means confined to acts of cruelty. The co-operation of many commanding officers in the systematic robberies carried out by the "Art Corps," and the partaking in, and notorious conniving at, individual thefts, which far surpassed the number of regrettable incidents of a similar kind which later occurred among the occupying troops of the Western democracies, must not be forgotten. It again illustrates their "straightforwardness" that German army commanders in occupied countries have often preferred to have the vilest actions — especially the mass-murder of admittedly innocent hostages and the burning of whole villages together with the inhabitants—performed by Gestapo men, or the specially trained Hitler S S, and, since some nationals of the occupied countries had disgraced themselves by "voluntarily" enlisting as members of the German military police service, this fact also could be exploited in propagating the theory that "these foreigners" had perpetrated the worst brutalities—an excuse as significant as lame, inasmuch as the mentality of all is the same, of actors, instigators, helpers, and abettors.

### III

#### GERMANS ABROAD

It is difficult, indeed impossible, to understand the unconcern with which the governments and peoples, great and small, both of Germany's neighbours and of countries overseas, looked on, before the war, at the building up in their own countries of that vast "Organisation der Auslandsdeutschen," in which Hitler was knitting together his fellow-countrymen of "Aryan" blood throughout the world; and it is particularly significant that the activities of that ominous association, assisted by agents of the Gestapo, were persisting

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p 135, note 3

<sup>2</sup>Cf. p 136

<sup>3</sup>The leader of the 6th U S A Army Group, General Devers, said in a broadcast interview on June 25th, 1945 "The German 'army,' hiding behind the professional soldiers' attitude, said it did not know what was going on. It did! The General Staff has been destroyed, and, for my part, I should shoot those who remain."

in certain totalitarian countries, and in others with a leaning towards totalitarianism, even in 1945<sup>1</sup>

No means—whether social and economic proscription, and threats of every kind, not only against the persons immediately concerned, but also against their relatives in Germany—were too base to be employed with a view to forcing all “Aryan” Germans living abroad into the “German clubs.” So great was the pressure that, indeed, it can be taken for granted that those German individuals who managed to withstand it were really convinced and reliable opponents of Hitlerism, and not merely indifferent.

The Nazis pretended that the clubs were nothing else than branches of a social and benefit society. They constituted, in fact, a strong political organisation acting under Party rules, by means of which the members and their children were pressed into the Nazi mould, “educated” in their “world-philosophy,” and poisoned with national conceit, race-hatred, and hypocrisy, just as were the Germans at home. It was the largest spy organisation imaginable, in which every parlour-maid, every waiter, every employee, was exploited for the purpose of obtaining political and economic information which might be useful to the Nazis in peace and war. It was the German centre for destroying the host-peoples from within, by undermining and paralysing their spiritual power of resistance against totalitarianism, and preparing the essential mood for the oppression and extermination of opponents, by any and every means, and without any regard for morality and right. The Nazi government was even impertinent enough—and it was often successful in its claim—to demand diplomatic status for the leaders of these allegedly “unpolitical groups of Germans” — leaders who were appointed directly by the Nazi Party in Berlin. But this is not the whole story. The organisation also endeavoured—though, of course, by using more subtle methods — to draw such *former* Germans of “Aryan” extraction into its nets as had become naturalised citizens of these foreign countries. Relatives living in Germany, often Party members, facilitated such attempts. Here we may trace also the founders and wire-pullers of the Fifth Columns which, before the war and in the period of Germany’s successes, increased so rapidly, particularly among the wealthy industrialists and merchants and the ambitious political extremists of those countries with large and coherent German communities maintaining close commercial connections with Germany. The Fifth Columns, the “States within the States,” received their political instructions through these camouflaged centres of Nazism.

<sup>1</sup>Cf e.g. the disclosures, in a speech of December 19th, 1944, in the House of Lords, of Viscount Templewood (formerly Sir Samuel Hoare), British Ambassador to Spain, about the activities of German Gestapo agents in that country, and see pp 135, 150, 153

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The fact that the Germans abroad, unlike their spiritually isolated fellow-countrymen within the Reich, were aware of the opinions of Nazism which, in spite of widespread misconceptions,<sup>1</sup> generally prevailed amongst other peoples—the fact, also, that they enjoyed an undistorted view of world-events, and had the evidence before their eyes that the slanderous assertions of the Nazis as to the democratic statesmen of, and the political and living conditions in, other countries were totally untrue—all this could not prevent them from becoming, to a large extent, the fanatical adherents of Hitler. This again supports the author's assertion that Nazism was an infectious mass psychosis to which, by tradition and education, German communities were more susceptible than others. Even if we make all proper allowances for those Germans abroad who joined the Nazi organisation because they were terrorised, or out of sheer stupidity—the great majority of the members were genuine Hitlerites, and the remainder were at least highly suspect of being more or less strongly infected with the malady.

The mentality of the larger German settlements abroad was not merely a war problem. While, since the beginning of the war, the Nazi Germans in the Allied countries have been isolated, a careful sifting—whether they are to be repatriated or re-educated, according to the degree of their infection—is also urgently needed not only in all the former Axis and satellite States of Europe, but generally in all those countries with closely knit German settlements.<sup>2</sup> We have, in another context, to return to the inevitable wholesale repatriation of Germans from East Prussia, parts of Silesia, the Sudeten—and perhaps still further boundary districts.<sup>3</sup> In the remaining larger German settlements throughout the world the evil spirit of Nazism must be extinguished by measures similar to those to be used in the re-education of Germany.<sup>4</sup> For instance, the foundation of, and the participation in, any secret political or semi-military German organisation must be made a crime, punishable by deportation; newspapers and pamphlets in the German language must be controlled;

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 51, 54 note 2, 175, 233-234, 236 note 2

<sup>2</sup>100,000 Germans are living in Chile, half the population of the Valdivia district being of German descent. Many of them, like the 30,000 Germans in the Misiones region of the Argentine, the 20,000 living in Buenos Aires, and those settled in the Santa Catarina district of Brazil, belong to the type of political immigrants who entered the "Organisation of Germans Abroad." Their sinister activities are known well enough, they included the forming of an SA group which arranged outings in the form of military manoeuvres, and every *Kreis* had its local Gestapo. (known as *Uschla*) responsible for many horrors. Everything was done to establish Germany's position as the leading power in the economy of these countries. Brazil, in particular, with her immense unexplored districts and her enormous mineral wealth—and only 1,870 miles from West Africa—had evoked the covetousness of the Nazis. Hitler had declared to his friends already in 1933 "We shall create a new Germany in Brazil. There we shall find everything we need."

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 283-286

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 311-327.

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no private German schools should be permitted, and the attendance of German children at municipal or other state-controlled schools must be made compulsory, etc. Past experiences have clearly enough shown the reality of the danger—which exists in every country where democracy is not supported by a long and sacred tradition—that the Nazi mentality may regain its contagiousness, and repeat its morbid growth, if the seed is not destroyed so thoroughly as to prevent further germination. The fact must not remain unnoticed that, at the end of 1944, when the approaching defeat of Germany became visible, a decree was issued relaxing the restrictions on the export of goods and money, and thus legalising the strong efforts made by German Nazis, not only to provide for a refuge for themselves, but also to create new underground organisations abroad, in order to uphold the Nazi spirit and carry on the movement.<sup>1</sup>

The Germans abroad have always shown—to say the least—an amazingly opportunistic adaptability in their political "convictions." Those living in Hungary and Rumania, for instance, who, at one time, could not boast loudly enough of their Nazism, had once already made a temporary rediscovery of their patriotic Hungarian and Rumanian feelings, when the question of their forcible repatriation had arisen at an earlier period of the war. Now the same phenomenon can be observed again, when those who so far have evaded their evacuation wish to remain. In the non-European settlements, too, most of the Germans will swear, when the question of their further permission to reside comes up for consideration, that their Nazi attitude had never corresponded with their true opinions. The sifting will be an extremely difficult and delicate business indeed. Those German democrats, at all events, who, in spite of vexations and allurements, kept aloof from the fatal "Organisation der Auslandsdeutschen," ought not to suffer with the guilty men, moreover, they will best be able to ascertain how far the asseverations of the others can be trusted

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The case of a particular group of German politicians abroad must still be touched on. There are some former adherents of Nazism in its earlier stages who, eventually, fell out with Hitler, left Germany, and offered, in various countries, their good services in the fight against Hitlerism, and especially in the task of converting and re-educating the Germans abroad. They blamed Hitler for having

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 162, 165. A report of Mr. William Clayton, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, presented to the Sub-Committee on War Mobilisation of the USA Senate Committee on Military Affairs, gives interesting details as to the point to which the German plans for transferring abroad sufficient funds and specially trained personnel to carry on Pan-German activities—even while the Allied armies are in occupation of Germany—have been carried into effect. The report also reveals that even by the summer of 1945 not one of the Axis spearheads in Argentina had been fully eliminated.

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"betrayed the original good aims of Nazism", and some of them expressed the opinion that "in the end it was a question of ideologies to determine what was to be the governmental system of tomorrow." Such declarations, however, constitute by no means a sufficient legitimation of their authors as trustworthy collaborators in the fight against Nazism and in the re-education of the Germans. For there was never anything good in Nazism, and we must insist that it was never even an honest "ideology" in the usual sense of the word. Nazism, as we believe we have proven in this book, was a plain relapse into barbarism, and an incarnation of all evil, and, however true it is that the World War was something very different from former wars between nations — concerning material issues — it was not very encouraging to be told coolly that the struggle against a dangerous and highly infectious mental mass disease was just a war of one "ideology" against another. Everyone who has been at any time a partisan of Nazism must, logically, once have consented to the devilish ideas and brutal methods on which the "movement" was based from its very beginning. No possibility of any "misconceptions" can be admitted—at all events, not in favour of anyone who ever belonged to the leading circles of the Nazi Party. Consequently, those who helped in the "making" of Nazi Germany cannot be excused because they broke with Hitler on account of some of his later actions. Unless they clearly admit the complete spiritual emptiness of the Nazi movement itself, and the wickedness of the underlying "world-philosophy" in its totality, and unless they plainly confess their own guilt as former direct or indirect helpers in the vast campaign of persecution and extortion, and in the exploitation of the lowest instincts, whereby the Nazis, long before the war started, and even before the official "seizure of power," poisoned the Germans at home and abroad, in order to attain their abominable ends—so long the impression is bound to remain that personal quarrels, wounded ambition, or similar motives, were the principal causes of the "conversion" of these men. The great task of re-educating the Germans at home and abroad demands not only clean hands, but also a great deal more than the mere desire to attack the person of Hitler or other Nazi gangsters. It presumes, above all, a genuine and indubitable abhorrence of the Nazi creed itself. No opponent of Hitler from the very outset would ever, even for tactical reasons, have accepted any man as an ally in the crusade against Nazism—let alone accepting him as helper in the re-education of the Germans—who could claim that at any time there was "something good" in Nazism. The same maxim, incidentally, should also be applied as regards former adherents of the "movement" inside Germany who, at a later stage, retired, or were removed, because they had incurred the personal displeasure of one of the Nazi bosses.



IV

THE REFUGEES FROM NAZI OPPRESSION

There remains that group of Germans abroad who are—and always were in actual fact—reliable allies. It consists—apart from the afore-said sturdy democrats who exposed themselves, and their relatives in Germany, to the fury of their fellow-countrymen by stubbornly refusing to join the sinister "Organisation der Auslandsdeutschen"—of the refugees from Nazi oppression. The regrettable fact that, at the end of the "phony war," the preventive measures in some of the startled Allied countries fell heavily, and without much discrimination, upon both these groups—the earliest foes and the first victims of the Nazis—constitutes yet another proof of how little the complex problem of the German mentality was understood abroad. This applies to the man in the street as well as to the leading circles.<sup>1</sup> The average citizen, especially in this country, infuriated and disappointed, reacting against his former amicable disposition toward Germans in general, was slow to understand that the exiles represent precisely that section of the German people which was not infected but most deeply affected by Nazism. All of them, indeed, have had personal experience of Hitler's methods, and many have passed through concentration camps and have been robbed of all that they possessed.

It was argued at that time that the refugees were the adversaries of the Nazis only, and not of "Germany," and that some of them might have thought it their duty, in spite of all, to help the German cause in the war. This argument was already illogical in itself. It can hardly be assumed that its promoters adhered to the theory of the "two different Germanies."<sup>2</sup> If, however, they shared the view put forward in this book—that, with some exceptions, the whole present generation of Germans must be regarded as guilty and as bearers of the Nazi spirit—why then did they presume that the refugees who, if anyone, represent such exceptions, should not draw precisely the same conclusions? In fact, no one could advance such a silly argument who had once clearly understood what is in the hearts and minds of those who fled from Nazi Germany. They had not only suffered at the hands of Hitler, but had lived to see the barbaric craze infect all the strata of the German people. No doubt the political and racial refugees had understood that this war was fought between the eternal and irreconcilable opposites of ethics,

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 159-160, 175, 233-235

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 234

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on the one side, and barbarism, on the other, and that they could not do a better service to a potential remnant of decent Germans than to serve with all their might the cause of those who were fighting against Germany. They were well aware that without a complete victory of the democratic powers there would be no world in the future worthy to exist and worthy to live in.

In order to be just, one must recall to mind the general shock which seized the public and the authorities in this country when, in the summer of 1940, the treacheries of the Fifth Column in Holland, Belgium and France became glaringly apparent—although many German anti-Nazis were less surprised than the diplomatists and politicians, and some of them had warned betimes their friends abroad. The writer has been able to make some rather instructive observations in Holland which revealed that even among that section of the Dutch police which had to deal with the German refugees there were secret adherents of the Nazi movement who laughed up their sleeves at the splendid opportunity of proving their proficiency and patriotic ardour by eagerly rounding up German refugees—full of expectation that, one day, they could serve them upon a charger to the sadism of the Nazi invader, as actually happened in France when Pétain “took over.” Even if one makes due allowance for the excitement and indignation evoked by the sudden discovery of the vast scale of the Fifth Column activities on the Continent, and for all the other heavy pressure weighing upon the authorities and the public mind at that critical time—it was, nevertheless, narrow-minded and wrong to treat the refugees in this country simply as “enemy” aliens: and great, undeserved, and unnecessary hardships were inflicted upon them during that period of a temporary xenophobia, by wholesale internment, the breaking up of families, and the deportation of many thousands of fugitives—not to mention the useless destruction of laboriously created new existences, and the loss of brains and arms available for the war effort. Imagine the feelings of such a man or woman when he or she—the most ardent haters of Nazism, of whom a British tribunal had certified that they had fled “from Nazi oppression”—were suddenly informed that the men would be interned in the Isle of Man, and, some time later, that thousands of husbands or sons had been sent—without an opportunity of saying farewell—to a camp in Canada or Australia “for the duration”; all this without any particular cause for suspicion, merely because “no risk could be taken.” We do not even propose to recall such incidents as happened on the “Duneira.”

To the refugees, at all events, these things meant anything rather

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than a comedy of errors. On their side you could, indeed, expect little understanding of the strange idea that it might help in the fight against the Nazis if one were to lock up their first victims. Some superficial apologists pretended that it was impossible to make clear distinctions between "these aliens." In fact, as was afterwards admitted in an official speech, far more was known respecting every single German refugee than respecting the average Englishman, and not one case of treachery on the part of genuine refugees has ever been known either in Great Britain or elsewhere. If after the sifting by the Home Office, the immigration officers, the police, and the tribunals there was still any doubt in a special case, it was easy to find the true facts by asking a Refugee Committee, which was able to trace the antecedents of nearly everybody. For most of the genuine refugees know one another. Those who then cried out for the internment of the "whole lot" did assuredly no good service to this country. Eventually, when the blunder was recognised, came the reluctant and extremely cautious release of certain "categories," still subject to highly disputable preconditions. "Usefulness," above all, should never have been made a condition of exemption from internment, since it had nothing to do with the one decisive question of loyalty, whether a person had, or had not, the skill or bodily ability to be usefully employed for the war effort. Though many things were done subsequently to repair injustices, a great opportunity has been wasted of making these early sufferers from Nazi brutality the grateful beneficiaries of British magnanimity.

Regard for the established reputation of this country as an asylum for the politically persecuted, and true human sympathy, should lead to the displaying of a more generous spirit, when many of these uprooted fugitives, who, in the meantime, have found a new home in this country, come to apply for their naturalisation. It is high time to emphasise that all is not yet well. Narrow-minded opinions, often enough influenced by anti-Jewish feelings, are still being expressed as to the best way of dealing with this problem. As late as April, 1945, a reader thought it witty to write a letter to *The Times* in which he pointed out that the German refugees were here not because they were anti-Hitler, but because Hitler was "anti-them." Why was he "anti-them"? And who could seriously assert that the refugees were not "anti-Hitler"? Apart from the fact that many of the German refugees would be very "useful" acquisitions in their capacity of scholars, employers, and specialists, the ethical point of view ought surely to prevail over the consideration that an infinitesimally small number might, perhaps, add to the difficulties of the labour market—in the very unlikely case

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that such difficulties should once again occur—or of the housing situation. Many of the refugees—or their sons—have served in the forces, given their lives as “stateless” soldiers, or done useful war work. Are they supposed to live again among Germans, great sections of whom will no doubt cling, openly or in secret, for some time to come, to racial hatred and fanaticism? Indeed, it would be cruel if any of the exiles, by direct or indirect means, and whether they would or would not be exposed to actual danger, should be forced to return to Germany.

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## V

## ANTI-NAZIS IN GERMANY

A few words will suffice to deal with the mentality of those genuine anti-Nazis — many of them former inmates of the concentration camps—who are still alive in Germany. They are the remnant of the Christian believers, certain cosmopolitan elements, and “Liberal and Marxist” adherents of a free-thinking world philosophy, and there are certain other natural opponents of Nazism, among them those Germans with a certain admixture of non-Aryan blood, who were treated as “inferiors”<sup>1</sup> The total number of the members of all these groups should not be over-estimated.<sup>2</sup>

The mentality of these circles shows the natural, structural, political, and educational varieties; but, taken as a whole, it differs very little from that of the neighbouring peoples. Indeed, only adherents of that sublime invention of the Nazis, the racial theory, could believe that the way of thinking of that small minority of Germans, who, for individual reasons, preserved their immunity from the mass psychosis of Nazism, would show essential points at variance with normal Europeans.<sup>3</sup> Nobody would deny the fact that the German people, in more favourable conditions, has produced its full proportionate share of great personalities — philosophers, scientists, and artists of all kinds—who contributed to the progress and delight of the world, until many of them began to succumb to the Pan-German monomania. On the other hand, one must not fall into the common error of exaggerating the proportion of Germans among the leading scientists and artists of the world. For instance, the percentage of important German musicians—composers and performers—is constantly overestimated. It hardly exceeds the share of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 124

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 88-90, 314-317

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 88-89, 103-105, 121, 234-235, 237-238

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Frenchmen, Italians, and Czechs in relation to the population of these nations, especially if one makes due allowance for the great number of Austrians and "non-Aryans" among the German artists.<sup>1</sup> The same is true as to the talent and love for music of the German people as a whole.

Some of the minor characteristics ascribed to the Germans, such as a more than usually closely-knit family life, and an exceptional love for the homeland — sometimes degenerating into a morbid nostalgia—are in fact not national but individual peculiarities. They are of small significance, and, at all events, would not indicate either a moral or intellectual advantage or deficiency. Like the often noted, undisguised sentimentality, and the bias towards mysticism,<sup>2</sup> which produced the earlier, metaphysical German philosophy, so strange to non-German thinkers, these traits are the outcome of special conditions of historical development which could be touched upon only in passing within the scope of this book—as, indeed, are the peculiarities of other peoples. Thus we could trace the roots of the well-known "German thoroughness, sense of detail, and talent for organisation," to the harsh rule of the Prussian Kings.

While we have argued that centuries of lopsided political and military tutelage and education were bound to develop national vices, there is, of course, no reason to believe that every man of "German blood" must, by the will of God, partake in the German mentality described in this book, a mentality which assuredly is no biological inheritance. But a strong mind was indeed necessary to keep aloof and remain unaffected by the poisonous influence of the milieu. Not infrequently one will be able to trace in individual cases the inner reasons for such uncommon powers of resistance: in family traditions, international connections, some peculiar experience of life, or special education. These free spirits in Germany, a living refutation of the "racial theory," are not only anti-Nazis—they are good Europeans. Their self-discipline did not degenerate into the herd-instinct, nor their patriotism into fanatical nationalism. Their religion withstood the new "world-philosophy," and their democracy did not surrender to totalitarianism. From their slender ranks, first of all, the re-educators of their fellow-countrymen and the rebuilders of another Germany must be drawn.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 69

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 8, 49, 56, 86

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 10-11

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 241, 320-321, 322 note 3

## CHAPTER XIII

### CATACLYSM—RECONSTRUCTION—RE-EDUCATION

*The destruction of Nazism—Germany's position in the future comity of Nations—Communism or Democracy?—The frontiers of post-war Germany—Dissolution of the "Reich"?—Disarmament—Reparation—Social and economic reforms—The War Criminals—Suggestions as to means and ways of Re-Education*

#### I

It was like a refreshing breeze at the end of a long and almost intolerable period of political stuffiness when, simultaneously with the declaration of war, a proclamation of the then British Government pronounced that the restitution of the conquered countries and the prevention of future German acts of aggression were not our only aims; that this was a modern crusade against "the evil of Nazism" itself, and that the war could never be terminated until its ultimate aim, the utter destruction of Nazism, was attained. This statement of Mr Chamberlain meant much more, indeed, than the acknowledgment by a deeply disappointed man that his whole policy of appeasement had been a mistake. Its high merit consisted in the repudiation—for the first time officially outspoken—of the dangerous dogma that Nazism, as a certain "ideology," was an "internal affair of another State," with which, on principle, no interference was permissible. The British Government, at long last, had discovered that Nazism — that is, the German "world-philosophy" put into practice — was in itself an evil that could no longer be endured by other states, because, by its very nature, it involved a continual threat to the whole world.<sup>1</sup> For this reason that declaration, which was overdue since 1933, will always retain its great political and moral value, however little was done during the period of the "phony war" to put the good intentions into practice.

Again, in the opinion of many people, it will remain the most admirable of Mr. Churchill's achievements that the fundamental principle that Nazism must be exterminated, root and branch, and that no covenanted whatsoever with a Germany ruled by Nazis would be imaginable, was imperturbably upheld against an almost overwhelming pressure, and also in the face of Hitler's

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 46, 159-160, 270-272.

peace offensives. The more the temporal distance from 1940 increases, the more difficult will it become to appreciate to the full what this unerring steadfastness really meant. One must not fail to remember that, at the downfall of France, Pétain's theory—that Hitler, and he alone, was a reliable "protector against Bolshevism"—was widely shared by powerful circles throughout the world. One must recall the fact that American capitalists openly declared at that time, and even later, that only a negotiated peace could preserve the British Empire and restore a profitable trade with the European continent, which would be under Nazi rule.<sup>1</sup> Non-interventionists were not only unwilling to pledge their youth, but were reluctant also to risk too much money in a struggle which they regarded as nearly lost. More, the very fight for democratic ideals was esteemed by many exponents of international wealth much more highly in theory than in practice. To estimate the weight of the pressure, one must remember that it was apparent that, with the greatest bravery, the war could not be continued, in the long run, without getting from America the necessary "tools," which at that time still had to be paid for in cash, while dollars were extremely scarce. To see the situation of this country in its full perspective one has to contrast it with the German condition of mental and moral insanity in those days, which had just found its classical expression in Goebbels' jubilant announcement that Hitler, at Christmas, 1940, would dictate, from Buckingham Palace, a "German peace." One must recall to memory the whole desperate position, "when Britain stood alone," must envisage that mountain of difficulties—even now only partially known to us—if one wishes to realise the indomitable energy then needed to uphold a clearly conceived conviction which had been dearly paid for.

But it is not merely the natural desire of paying tribute, in a book like this, to a great personality in whom the vigorous will of the British people to resist the "evil of Nazism" was embodied — there is a further reason which causes us to stress the point that at that critical stage, when all outward aspects of this country were at the darkest, the whole non-totalitarian world not merely stood in awe of Britain, but looked to her for inspiration and encouragement. For this fact makes it plain that not material power, but the unerring resolve to resist the German policy of force, without giving a thought to compromising—that this *moral* strength of the British attitude was the intrinsic cause why, in the eyes of all free-thinking men, the prestige of this country then reached its greatest height. It may be, perhaps, the historic lesson to be derived from

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 222, 235-236, 256-257, 299-301, 311

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this fact that a courageous idealism, combined with common sense, is a much stronger basis in politics than a too opportunistic "realism," and that the British Commonwealth, though the smallest of the Big Three, should make herself the champion in the fight against the spirit of aggression, *wherever* it may be found. For it cannot too often be repeated that the victory in this war created only a pre-condition of winning that greater adventure. Aggressiveness and arbitrary power policy no doubt are the very characteristics of totalitarianism in all its forms. But they are not an exclusive privilege of totalitarian rule. All and everything, indeed the welfare of mankind, depends on the question whether, after the laying low of the arch-aggressors of the past, that general "freedom from fear" can be established without which no human progress is conceivable, and the special subjects of the terminal chapter of this book are closely connected with this fundamental problem.

Indeed, we cannot turn to the question, how to remould the Germans into a peaceful, "collaborating" people and refit them into the European community, without first dwelling for a moment on the problem what kind of comity of nations it may be to which the Germans are to be adapted. The shape of the future world must influence decisively the living conditions of every individual people and, consequently, its attitude towards its neighbours and its sense for collaboration. As to the Germans, for all their obedience, we cannot presume that they have at all a profound desire to collaborate. It depends obviously on the question what the "better world" will look like, whether a truly co-operative spirit can be gradually inculcated in them, and what methods must be applied, in order to induce and to enable them to play the game

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We have to start from the United Nations Charter. As soon as the plan of Dumbarton Oaks was announced, German propaganda had been quick to belittle and ridicule it. The main argument—that the peace plan does not provide for a formulated covenant binding the Great Powers to wage war in certain circumstances—was in itself a typical product of the German mentality, which could not imagine<sup>1</sup> that moral obligations and spiritual ties can prove no less efficient agents than explicit agreements. But very much—in the long run too much, perhaps—may depend, indeed, upon the undisturbed goodwill and the maintaining of close relations between numerous nations so very different in many respects, and not connected by a long common tradition comparable to that of the British Commonwealth.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 223-225



The Charter of San Francisco has no doubt succeeded in avoiding those weaknesses of the League of Nations which were of a mainly technical nature. In the possibility of taking quick and energetic action, and in the valuable clauses which enable the new organisation to repress threats of breaches of the peace, without waiting until war itself has broken out—clauses whose importance is evident in view of our past experiences—we have, indeed, great improvements. But the fact remains that the apparatus, which, under the fresh impression of the World War, has been devised primarily with a view to the known aggressor nations, cannot be put into action against the will of one of the Big Three or Four. True, even if there were no veto-clause at all, the machinery must automatically break down as soon as one of the Great Powers should arbitrarily decide to wage war. But although the possibility always exists that a solemn international covenant may be suddenly torn up like a scrap of paper, and, obviously, no absolute guarantee of peace can be created—save by the formation of a perfect *super-national* world union under its own powerful central authority, an ideal for which, apparently, the world is not yet ripe. For all this it makes a considerable difference whether or not each of the Great Powers would be *legally* entitled under the covenant to forbid official sanctions, and even inconvenient discussions, at least as far as itself is concerned. How serious this weakness is appears from the very fact that two of the Great Powers insisted on the veto-clause as a *conditio sine qua non*. However understandable it is that Russia, with respect to her past experiences and the whole mentality of her government, and the U.S.A., where the case is complicated by constitutional difficulties, were not prepared to make formal surrender of the right of ultimate decision on the issue of war or peace—the fact remains none the less disappointing, this all the more as certain governments of the smaller States—though not all of them—have declared that they are amenable to the principle that all members must transfer a substantial part of their sovereignty to the United Nations Organisation. It is no wonder that a certain uneasiness is perceived particularly by such smaller nations as feel that, admittedly or not admittedly, they live within the “sphere of influence” of a mightier neighbour. The security plan is a valuable nucleus, a hope—indeed a great hope. But its cautious formulation shows, despite a high-minded and encouraging preamble how strongly ideological differences, national pride, the *vis inertiae*, and unfortunately, also, the reluctance unconditionally and once for all to abandon the arbitrary use of force, still continue to bar the approach to a truly supreme *supernational* institution, endowed with the right and the real power of enforcing the will

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of the community, or the decisions of its tribunal, against every single State, or combination of States, without depending on the goodwill of certain powerful members, an organisation resting on a sound democratic basis, in which the smaller States would not have the uncomfortable feeling of being left, after all, to the benevolence of the great. So long as, in particular, the principle of the "unrestricted" sovereignty of the individual States—which, since Wilhelm II applied it, half a century ago, to undermine the peace conference at The Hague,<sup>1</sup> has continued to form the main obstacle to organising the peace of the world—so long as this principle is rigidly upheld in other words, so long as certain Powers decline to submit to international arbitration all and every matter of dispute which cannot be settled by negotiation: so long as they insist on making and executing independently their own decisions in questions which they themselves regard as "affecting the national honour or vital interests," as Wilhelm's old and odious formula put it—so long can the United Nations Organisation never rise above the status of a mere *international* agency. The "important thing is"—as President Truman put it—"that all our thinking and all our actions should be based on the resolution that it is, in fact, only a first step." If even the discovery of the atomic bomb fails to alter the attitude of the Great Powers as regards the transfer of the necessary parts of their sovereignty to a mighty and truly *supernational* authority, the peace of the world and, indeed, our civilisation and very existence will be in jeopardy. That is so even though the war potential of our enemies in the past war is going to be reduced to nil.

In one respect at least the sovereignty problem has an immediate bearing on the object of this book. The Charter of the United Nations—though it avoids using the ominous term "internal affairs"—expressly forbids "all intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State." This clause, which was inserted in order to underline the axiom that the "sovereignty" of every State<sup>2</sup> shall remain untouched and absolute, implies no doubt a retrograde step, if compared with the highly valuable proclamation of the British Government mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Already in our historical survey of Nazism<sup>3</sup> we had to criticise the dangerous ambiguity and inconsistency of the term "internal affairs" and to point to the fact that the principle of "non-interference" has been misused again and again in modern history by irresponsible governments as a convenient prerequisite to rejecting, with reference to their unimpeachable "sovereignty," foreign inter-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Cf Chapter I, Article 2, clauses 1 and 7 of the Charter

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 46, 266

# CATACLYSM—RECONSTRUCTION—RE-EDUCATION

vention in cases, *inter alia*, of the worst political, religious or racial persecutions, or encroachments on national minorities. True, this beneficial "internal affairs" clause would not be applicable to our enemies in the World War—although it may be useful to recall to mind the time when Germany was hastily admitted to the League of Nations. But what about Fascist and semi-Fascist nations with whom we have not been at war? Is it imaginable that, while the utter destruction of Fascism of any kind in the enemy countries is the outspoken Allied war aim Number One, it could be left—as their own purely "internal affair"—to all other peoples, excepting only our enemies in this war, to shake off, or retain, or to adopt anew, a totalitarian system? Even if we should set aside all "intransigent doctrinaireism and exaggerated idealism," to quote the usual phrase — even if we should admit that the behaviour of the "neutral" Fascists has differed somehow to advantage from that of the proved aggressors, and assume that in a future world, in which the great democracies will play the leading part, the danger radiating from a few such States would be less acute—all rather questionable premises—would such restraint not, for all this, remain an intolerable weakness and inconsequence? This appears in great clearness in comparison with the admirable preamble, and with those clauses of the United Nations Charter which emphasise the promotion of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the individual,<sup>1</sup> without discrimination of colour, race, or religion. For the basic rights of men constitute a contradiction in terms of the very principles of Fascism in all its forms. Indeed, is there any moral possibility of retracting from Mr Cordell Hull's plain conclusion in his Easter speech, 1944, when he said: "Free Governments and Nazi and Fascist Governments cannot exist together in this world, Fascism and Nazism must go *everywhere*; their leaders, their institutions, the power which supports them, must go; they can expect no opportunity to return . . ." <sup>2</sup> If we adhere to the democratic axiom, that every mature people is entitled to decide its own affairs and kind of government,<sup>3</sup> would it not be an elementary requirement both of morals and of political wisdom to make sure that all peoples which are now under Fascist or semi-Fascist rule have had *in fact* an opportunity of making their decision as to the

<sup>1</sup>Cf the debate in the House of Lords on December 19th, 1944, and p. 257 note 1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf also the declaration to the Press of Mr Edward Stettinius, U.S. Secretary of State, at the Inter-American Conference of Chapultepec, 1945, to which Argentina was not invited. "The American Republics here represented are united in their resolve to frustrate any possibility that Nazism or Fascism, after being crushed in this war, might survive in this hemisphere." And see the 5th of the "12 commandments of U.S.A. foreign policy," proclaimed by President Truman on October 27th, 1945.

<sup>3</sup>In this sense the term "democracy" is used throughout this book. Cf also President Truman's "4th Commandment."

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form of their government in full freedom—just as this right has been solemnly acknowledged with respect to the liberated countries.<sup>1</sup> And is there, in practice, any such guarantee in any totalitarian country? True, no individual people or coalition of peoples could be expected to “tutor” the world. But a really strong World Union could and should fulfil precisely this task. As regards the special problems of this book, it needs no saying that, apart from the peril of re-germination of Nazism in the related atmosphere of other totalitarian or semi-totalitarian countries, any weakness towards such countries must inevitably produce most undesirable repercussions with respect to German re-education. It is plain that this task would be heavily prejudiced,<sup>1</sup> if those whom we wish to convert into good democrats could impeach the strength of our convictions by pointing out that we had been ready to put up with autocratic rule by self-appointed dictators in other countries.

In the economic field, no less than in the political, it is apparent that a perfect solution can only be obtained through a *supernational* World Union—it was a highly valuable and, in its simplicity, immediately convincing proposition when President Roosevelt told us that the future better world of truly collaborating peoples, freed from fear, and assured of a decent living standard for everybody, is to be achieved by removing obstacles of production and trade, and by making markets equally accessible to all peoples.<sup>2</sup> But this arrangement of production and distribution throughout the world in strict accordance with purely economic principles, this opening of the frontiers, this abolishing of all unproductive expenses—including those of the individual States for military purposes—would presume full and justifiable general confidence in a lasting peace and in the stability of the world situation. The close reciprocity between peace, international collaboration, and general confidence is obvious, and, as the cosmopolitan solution in which this happy trinity would be a matter of course is clearly unobtainable, for the time being, we are *en route*—via Quebec, Hot Springs, Atlantic City, Bretton Woods, Chicago, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, and back to Quebec—to find a surrogate as good as possible; a surrogate which, unfortunately, must be bought, by every individual people, at the high price of all those sacrifices in money, manpower, and—still more essential—in maintaining many unnatural arrangements of industry, which are necessary in order to protect itself in the case of war.

These inevitable deficiencies of the immediately expected “better world” do not yet tell the whole story. The opinions as to the meaning and the methods of international economic collaboration

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 314

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also President Truman's 8th and 10th “commandment”

are still so heavily divided that little common ground exists even as regards the broad principles. It is not so much the fundamental difference between our own and the Communist system that matters most. Indeed, a broader economic co-operation with Soviet Russia would technically be a simple matter, inasmuch as she has a perfect public trade organisation at her disposal, through which she handles already the trade within the Communist Republics and with the outer world. The real obstacle to an organised world-wide economic co-operation consists in powerful so-called "individualistic" tendencies in many countries, tendencies which are more or less hostile to any kind of a planned world economy. Particularly in the U.S.A.—though political "isolationism" has almost entirely lost its influence, and the notion that trade barriers must be lowered has made considerable progress—the conviction of the necessity of international economic collaboration still exhausts itself mainly in generalities. When it comes to details the deep difference appears between the cherished American principle of almost unrestricted individual competition, and the modern British spirit, which—much closer as we are, in space and spirit, to the European centres of war and unrest and to a rapidly progressing social transition of this continent—has made the Britons in general more conscious of the necessity of public guidance, in economic and social life, by a democratic government. There is a certain truth in the dictum that, in a sense, America now represents the "old world."

A vast number of schemes of a *better world* has been supplied by private planners—not always to the advantage of the matter. While very useful preparatory work has been done in particular by the Planning Associations in the U.S.A., the publication of fanciful and dilettante private plans in the economic field has sometimes, if unwittingly, helped the reactionary faction of those who have either drawn a fearful picture of an "unspiritual" regulated world, or tended to postpone everything until the Greek Kalends, with the excuse that first things must be done first. The private planning, at any rate, has brought to light the disturbing diversity of opinion as to the question of how the great aim of securing general prosperity should be realised. Before—if at all—an agreed solution of the complex problem of real international collaboration could be found, a solution to which numerous dissenting social, economic, and political groups in all parts of the world wished to make their influence felt, the conflicting views had to be reconciled as far as possible. Thus, we stated in the first version of this book, three years before the first Quebec conference, that one of the most urgent tasks

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was to set up an international committee of the best brains to prepare, in good time, in close collaboration with the leading statesmen of the democratic peoples, really constructive plans.

The task of the European Advisory Committee has been confined to organising the temporary occupation of the continent, and the aforesaid series of preliminary international conferences, though they have brought many important individual questions nearer to a solution, have touched, after all, only the fringe of the universal problem. The Dumbarton Oaks plan, by stating that one of the main purposes of the United Nations Organisation must be to "achieve co-operation in the solution of international, economic, social, and other humanitarian problems," grasped, for the first time, the problem of the future *better world* in its totality, i.e., in both its so closely interwoven aspects — security and prosperity — though it went into details only as regards the security problem. The Charter of San Francisco, too, constitutes rather an abstract of general aims than a real plan. Only the apparatus which shall provide the "social, economic, and humanitarian improvements" for which our unaccomplished world is longing has been devised. What about the contents? It still remains to be seen how far the United Nations Organisation will go in making itself responsible for a master plan which would make it practicable—and, at the same time, inevitable—to all nations to renounce trade barriers, to forbid all sorts of restrictions, such as quotas and international cartels, and to help, heart and hand, in the expansion of world trade. It also is yet an open question whether the Organisation may set up—one day—its own institutions for the organisation of international economic collaboration, or whether it will confine itself to giving advice and assistance to the member States, and leave it to them to conclude, within the new framework, their own bi- or multilateral treaties as "regional" agreements. Perhaps it may be hoped that sooner or later some large and truly self-sufficient economic units of coherent, economically interdependent countries will be formed, units in the nature and of the size of a genuine Commonwealth. An Economic Commonwealth of Europe—the very opposite of a New Order of the Nazi style, with one "master people" exploiting the "collaborating" nations—might well be able to plan in earnest, within its own wide area, the best places and methods of production, and regulate distribution and the collective exchange of surpluses with similar units in other parts of the world. It could, indeed, form the beginning of an economic world community, while certain trade and exchange agreements, which already have been negotiated between the governments of some neighbouring peoples in Western and Middle Europe,

useful as they may be for the parties concerned, do not really constitute much more than the usual customs unions. Meanwhile the familiar controversies as to tariffs and monetary policy, preferential treatment, the questions of State-controlled bulk sales and bulk purchases abroad, or free international and internal trade, etc., are still proceeding everywhere with undiminished zeal. For the moment, at all events, it is still more difficult than in the political field to gain a clear preconception of the shape of the future economic world which is in the making.

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Again, what has all this to do with the German mentality? A very great deal, indeed!• The reader will soon discover by himself that the task of refitting Germany into international life, and of carrying through all those economic, social, and political measures which must be imposed upon her, equally in the interest of the peace and prosperity of Europe and in order to create a new Germany of a different social structure—that this extremely difficult task would be much easier if there existed a supreme *supernational* world authority and a solid economic union at least of the European nations. Moreover, as already indicated, it is a doubtful question how long, without such a paramount organisation, a sufficient measure of unity, mutual confidence, and reciprocity can be maintained among the nations, to support a peaceful equilibrium of Europe. Under the aegis of, and in the atmosphere radiating from, a firmly established super-national community of nations, it would also be much easier to remould the Germans into good Europeans, and the fury and exasperation, which is bound to follow the amputation of large frontier districts,<sup>1</sup> and the expulsion of millions of Germans, might be more easily overcome. Perhaps it is even not mere utopianism to imagine that the Germans whose national sovereignty will at any rate be in abeyance during many years of occupation, might eventually become the nucleus of a new European cosmopolitanism.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it might be very difficult to impress the Germans with the practical value of our political ideals, if these ideals did not, eventually, supersede the dangerous new nationalism which has grown up in many European countries, and if we could not achieve so much cosmopolitan thinking, common sense, and practical harmony among ourselves, as would enable us to create an institution whose high desirability is generally recognised — in theory.

If we succeed in developing, step by step, a true World Union in

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 284-287

<sup>2</sup>Cf the interesting suggestions made by Commander Stephen King-Hall, M P, in the House of Commons, quoted in the National News Letter No 429

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the political, economic, and social fields, it may be hoped that the *better world* of the future will not remain a dreamland; and that one day a re-educated generation of Germans, whose fathers have passed through the cleansing purgatory of the post-war period, will participate in it. If, however, the attempt should definitely fail, if each people begins anew to regard its neighbours primarily as the potential foes of to-morrow, against whom not ethnological, but heavily fortified strategical frontiers must be upheld, while strong and costly armies, absorbing valuable manpower, are to be maintained, if economics cannot, in due course, be organised in accordance with the optimum obtainable on a basis of internationally planned schemes of production and distribution; if, instead of this, the thought is lurking everywhere in the background that national economies must be devised in such a manner that the nations can quickly be made self-supporting, "in case the worst comes to the worst"—then good-bye to the "better world"! It is only too clear also that in such an atmosphere there would be little hope of re-educating the Germans in earnest. To maintain, almost indefinitely, a watchdog system of heavily-armed nations would involve an imminent danger that the watchdogs might suddenly forget their common duty and begin to bite one another, to the great delight of their ward, and with his eager assistance.

## II

It cannot be foreseen with any certainty what the final political result may be now that the German mentality is faced with all the consequences of a cataclysm which has shaken not only the political, social and economic foundations of the nation, but also the conditions of life of every individual German. This equation contains too many unknown factors besides the one which concerns the future "better world." Indeed, we cannot do any more than venture a few remarks, which may make it easier for the reader to do his own guessing as to the whole difficult problem.

We have concentrated in this book upon showing first and foremost how deeply the poison of Nazism has depraved the soul of the German people. But, if we want to grasp what lies ahead, we have also to take into account the material aspect of the matter: i.e., the fact that actually everyone in Germany who held a post of even moderate importance in public and private life owed it to his connection with the Party. Besides the "élite" of the seven hundred members of the Reichstag there were the innumerable officials of the State, the boroughs, the schools, the law-courts, all of them carefully



tested as to their political "reliability"; and in addition to these the functionaries of the administrative, social and economic parallel organisations set up everywhere by the N.S.D.A.P. in order to control the State machinery, not to speak of the gigantic apparatus, beginning with the *Gauleiters* and ending with an army of *Blockwarts*, which had to handle the internal administration of the Party itself. There are the recklessly "purged" and rigidly organised "liberal" professions of the barrister-solicitors, the doctors, the engineers, the architects and artists. Down to the managers of small private businesses, to the foremen and the better-paid workers, every post that provided a position and an assured income was in the hands of tested Nazis, and all these "economic-political" profiteers, great and small—with the exception of some party-bosses and exponents of wealth who had succeeded in transferring large funds to foreign countries, and imagined that they could individually make their escape<sup>1</sup>—were well aware that they were one and all in the same boat.

Together with genuine fanaticism and the grip of the Gestapo, it was largely this state of things which accounted for the stubbornness of the German resistance when it was already obvious that the war was lost, and it was fairly plain that, after the acknowledgment of the defeat, an immediate effort would be made to save as much as possible of the whole conglomeration—as was, indeed, attempted by the naive overtures of Hitler's "successor," Donitz, and his new Foreign Minister, von Schwerin-Krosigk. If the Germans had been left to themselves it would have been by no means improbable that a new semi-authoritarian government, formed by the former "ruling classes," would have been able to keep itself in power. In the first version of this book, when considering the potential developments at the end of the war, we pointed out that, at the height of a national emergency, when political situations are known to undergo rapid alterations, and power is for the taking, it might as well be possible, under German conditions, that a resolute general would snatch the opportunity and carry the people with him, as that an extreme Communist régime might emerge. But the optimism was assuredly excessive of those believers in the theory of the "two Germanies" who confidently expected that, immediately the war was over, legendary millions of genuine democrats would reappear who had preserved their principles intact during the period of Nazism. As the reader knows, it was Germany's misfortune that, for reasons indicated throughout this book, the democratic heartwood of the German tree could never gather real strength, and that the hope that it would grow during the period of the Weimar Republic had been nipped in the bud. Thus if—without a previous

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 259

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and very thorough internal "settling of accounts"—a new "democratic" German Government had spontaneously presented itself to the Allies, simultaneously with the declaration of surrender, such an apparently attractive solution would have had to be regarded with justified suspicion. Nobody could have been sure how much was truth and how much camouflage; and apart from this, when the—to all appearances so promising — democratic evolution after 1918 logically led to Nazism, because the politically unripe people, with its herd instincts, its weakness for theatrical effects, its militarism and chauvinism, was not equal to the psychic shock and the convulsions following the breakdown of the "Kaiserreich"—what reason should we have had to think that the same thing might not happen again?

Considering the hopelessly unsettled political conditions in Germany it was no doubt the best course that could have been chosen when it was decided, at the Crimea Conference, not to let the Germans stew in their own juice, but, for the time being at all events, to prevent all internal strife, to vest German sovereignty in an inter-allied body, and to keep the country under more or less military rule, in order, first of all, to carry out disarmament, demilitarisation, and denazification. While agreement has been reached, in theory, at and after the Tripartite Conference of Berlin, on the principles of a co-ordinated allied policy of occupation, and on the treatment of Germany as an economic unit, it is obvious that, in practice, the conditions must be rather different in the various "zones"; all the more so with respect to the divergencies in the ideological and political views of the Russian commanders and those of the Western Allies. Although the after-effects must be far-reaching, it would be useless for us to dwell on transitory conditions of which we have but scanty knowledge, particularly as regards the Russian zone. It remains to be seen whether in the course of time some sort of German central government with limited powers will be set up by the Allies as a further interim organisation, or whether—and when—part of the still valid Constitution of Weimar may again be put into operation, or certain parts of Germany will become independent.<sup>1</sup> However long the postponement may last—and it will take a considerable time until the destruction of Nazism, so "that no vestige remains," will have made sufficient progress—one day the question under which form of non-Fascist government Germany is to live must be decided by the Germans themselves. It may be wise, not even temporarily to dismiss this problem from our thoughts, which is of paramount

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. President Truman's 5th "Commandment" and, on the other hand, General de Gaulle's sweeping statement "There is no Reich." See also pp. 286-291.

importance for the future of Europe and whose elements are crystallizing now.

The severe political split among the Germans which was bound to follow the breakdown of the Nazi State concerned, above all, the Nazi conglomeration itself. Already the "millions of guerillas carrying on the fight in all those parts of Germany where forest and mountain provide the necessary cover" are seen to have been imaginary, and the suicides of Goebbels and many leading Nazi gangsters after the débâcle indicate that they, at least, had no great confidence in the possibility of carrying on the movement in totally different conditions. Of course, such symptoms must not be overestimated. The menace of a large and well-camouflaged underground movement with "Feme" courts, political murder, and other familiar features—a method much better attuned to the Nazi mind than real guerilla warfare—may persist for years to come. Even if the leading gangsters have disappeared, there are enough fanatics, especially among the returning prisoners of war; and numerous underlings and pauperized profiteers who may escape will be unable to forget their glorious days and endure a life in obscurity. We do not believe, however, that there will be much terrorizing of the troops of occupation and Allied officials, by way of sabotage or murder; the activities of these people and their secret agents will not begin at once, and they will be directed mainly against collaborating German "traitors" and returning refugees. They will organise and — bide their time. But, after all, the numbers of those who may join an underground movement in order to restore Nazism can only be limited; and it well may be that, to all outward appearances, the disintegration of Nazism will make surprisingly rapid progress, this all the more, as we know that the bulk of its adherents was composed of the most heterogeneous elements.

The problem of the internal political evolution of Germany depends in the highest degree on the question of the direct and indirect influence of a prolonged Russian occupation of large parts of the country. Even if the Soviet administration, which already<sup>1</sup> has introduced a far-reaching "land reform," refrains from further interference with the social and economic structure, we have to bear in mind that the "remoulding of Germany," and words like "political re-education" and "democratic government" may have a rather different connotation in the Russian opinion and in our own.<sup>2</sup> The political tendency of an occupying power like Russia must show itself in innumerable measures of daily routine in all walks of life, and it is natural that we ask ourselves, for instance, what the Russian attitude

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 296 note 3

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 271 note 3

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would be if a powerful Communist movement in Germany should come into conflict with other, non-Fascist political groups. The natural psychological attraction which Communism must exercise upon the working class of an economically depressed and enemy-occupied Germany can hardly be exaggerated. The political developments in those parts of Eastern Europe which have been freed by the Russians are rather obscure, even apart from this they could not easily be assessed as regards possible conclusions with respect to a "liberated" Germany. But already, during the British occupation of the other principal Axis country, it has appeared that a great part of the Italian working class was under the impression—as a report in *The Times* aptly expressed it—that Great Britain and the U.S.A., being "rich countries," had little community of interest with a "poor country" but that Russia, "standing for a free proletariat, was clearly cut out to be Italy's friend." It remains to be seen how far the change of government in France and this country may influence the German workers in a different direction; and the attitude of the British and American Trade Unions towards the German Labour Organisation will also prove to be of the greatest importance<sup>1</sup>

A considerable proportion of German workers—not only in the East—may immediately turn towards Communism. But it is not improbable also that many uprooted from other classes of society might hasten to join a Communist movement, a development which would in no way indicate that they had not previously been perfectly good Nazis, all the more so, as we know that, in spite of Hitler's successful raising of the standard of a "European crusade against Bolshevism" before the eyes of representatives of wealth and other Philistines, no insurmountable antagonism ever existed between the Nazi "convictions" and the fundamental conceptions of Communism, particularly a Communism of the outspoken nationalist and centripetal Russian variety.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, many members of the German middle class, who at one time flocked to join the Nazi Party on account of Hitler's anti-Communist propaganda, will continue to resent any attempt to establish Communism, although the invasion may have turned many of them into proletarians. Strong anti-Communist disposition and a considerable political influence also may be expected from the majority of the millions of forcibly "repatriated" Germans—whilst it may be more difficult to forecast the attitude of their children. The 250,000 East Prussian refugees in Denmark, for instance, who fled when the Russian invasion started, are, according to reliable reports, unmistakably anti-

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 302

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 183, 238

Communist Hitler-worshippers. Much will, of course, depend on the whole manner in which the Russians, in the long run, treat the Germans in their zone of occupation<sup>1</sup>, and nobody can predict either the political effect upon the masses of a compulsory conscription of German labour for reconstruction work abroad, or the opinions of the returning workers, when they have observed with their own eyes the political and living conditions in Soviet Russia and elsewhere

### III

It must be frankly admitted, after all this, that to make suggestions as regards the remoulding of Germany is very much like building on unknown ground. Neither do we possess a solid knowledge of the material and spiritual conditions of the future world in which the German evolution is to take place, nor is there any certainty whether or not the Germans may, sooner or later, turn towards Communism—in which case the very basis of most of our proposals would, obviously, disappear and the remoulding would become an entirely Russian task. Our suggestions as to political re-education would, anyhow, apply to the districts under the occupation of the Western democracies only. However, as regards the problem of a “better world,” it may be not too optimistic to assume that commonsense will finally be strong enough to bring about a workable union of collaborating peoples throughout the world, and that within a reasonable time the nations of Europe will come together, if not yet in a real European Commonwealth, at least in some practicable substitute. As to the second unknown factor, we may assume, that, after all, a non-Communist Germany, or, in any case, some democratic German States in the South and West of the present Reich, may emerge. This hypothesis — not very strongly founded though it is—starts from the fact that the “abyss of Communism,” from which, allegedly, Germany was saved by Hitler in 1932, was but a purposeful invention<sup>2</sup>; while nothing has ever become known which pointed to the existence of a substantial Communist underground movement under the Nazi régime. Moreover, recent developments in the liberated countries, including those of Eastern Europe, prove unmistakably an increasing resistance against Communistic tendencies, while Russian utterances and actions, on the other hand, have shown, so far, no great enthusiasm for a Communistic Germany. Further arguments for our opinion may be derived from considerations with respect to the geographical position of Germany—lying between democratic nations to north, south, and west, and separated from Russia by the Czechoslovakian democracy

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 297

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 43-45

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and an, at least, not fully Communist Poland. Thus we shall venture to offer to the reader a few observations as to the Berlin Declaration and some suggestions as to how to treat the Germans in order to achieve a gradual adaptation of their mentality to that of good Europeans. A few remarks as to the form of the armistice and peace instruments may be premised

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It is apparent that in the absence of a fully representative and, at the same time, reliable German government no final peace treaty can be made, and, on the other hand, that no restoration of German sovereignty to any government would be imaginable until the necessary security, punitive, and many other measures have been put into effect. Indeed, it will constitute the best "sanction," and may spare us many disappointments similar to those experienced after 1918, if, under a prolonged occupation and with no formal peace treaty yet in existence, all necessary military measures, including the reopening of hostilities, can immediately be taken if any attempt at evading the armistice conditions should be made. Thus, practically the whole host of measures of reparation and a great many urgent internal reforms must be put into operation during this period of transition, and it was obvious that the principles to govern the treatment of Germany in the initial stage had to be promulgated in an official document.

Now the question has been largely ventilated who should sign such a document on behalf of Germany. It was suggested that it might be a safeguard against future repudiation to have it signed by leading Nazis or members of the German ruling classes. A prominent American indeed proposed that "in order to make the German people accept democracy as a way of life . . . and not grasp the first opportunity to re-establish militarism . . . we should insist that the Nazi Government remains in office for at least part of our occupation of Germany and assumes the responsibility of carrying out the orders of our military commanders, including the disarmament and the punitive measures."<sup>1</sup> In fact, there was no need at all to obtain a German signature. It was certainly a good thing to have the declaration of "general unconditional surrender" signed by the highest commanding officers of the three German services, in order to prevent the development of a new legend of an "invincible German army,"<sup>2</sup> and to obtain the signature of Hitler's "successor," Donitz, to a similar instrument, as an unmistakable token of the common responsibility of the "amalgamated" Party and army, visible

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mr. Emery Reves' letter to the *New York Times*, reprinted in *National News Letter* No. 407.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 25-26, 32, 65, 249.

to everyone, and for all future times. But a deed recording the imposed terms had to be signed—if at all—by those Germans upon whom we might think we could bestow the necessary confidence that they would honestly co-operate in carrying out what they had promised.

For many reasons, however, it was preferable to proclaim the terms unilaterally, as was done, indeed, after the Conference of Berlin. That the conditions would be a plain dictate had been expressly stated already in Mr. Cordell Hull's Easter speech, 1944,<sup>1</sup> when he said: "they can expect no compromise, no negotiated peace", and the joint Allied declaration after the Crimea Conference had been no less explicit in saying that the conditions of the armistice would be "imposed" and "enforced." Indeed, the method of plain dictation, as applied by the French in certain cases after the Great War—the result of experience gained as Germany's neighbours, and a method in accordance with the habits of the Germans themselves—was not only apt to exact much greater respect, but was even less repugnant to the German mind than the British way of "bargaining."

Materially, the most elementary premiss of any negotiation—the honesty of the negotiators—could not be presumed in any such German agents as might have been regarded as representative of a majority of their fellow-countrymen.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it must be recalled to mind that, even long before Hitler's ascent, the Germans attempted to make fine distinctions, and to repudiate the reparation clauses of the Versailles Treaty, arguing that they had not entered these "merely political" engagements as free agents, but had only signed under pressure. Since then, as the reader knows,<sup>3</sup> it had become a German matter of routine to repudiate, because of "changed circumstances," inconvenient covenants of every kind whose nature as "negotiated treaties" nobody could seriously dispute. Therefore—in the long run at all events—we could not with any greater confidence expect the loyal fulfilment of any terms, merely because they were laid down in the solemn form of an international covenant. Even the most considerate conditions imaginable, after what has befallen the world three times within a century by reason of German lust for war, would have been decried as harsh and humiliating. Honest men who should have declared their consent in such an instrument, would only have been exposed to the clamorous accusation of the "patriots" that they had sold their country, the more so if the signature was given by a Government established by the Allies.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 271

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 215-217, 224-225, 229-230

<sup>3</sup>Cf. pp 25, 31-33, 36-38, 65, 123, 153-154, 161-166

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 113, 211-212, 217-218

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp 25, 32, 65

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What really matters, of course, is not the form of the armistice and peace documents. Nor is it of great importance whether the terms appear to a superficial observer to be "hard" or "soft." The decisive factor is that the conditions must be apt to secure the great aims of the war—i.e., the absolute exclusion of any possibility of a fresh aggression and the future honest co-operation of Germany in the welfare of the world. "Security" and "co-operation" are, indeed the two crucial points. It was the inadequacy of the measures of security and the fact that not enough was done, materially and spiritually, to achieve honest political, social, and economic co-operation of the Germans that wrecked the Treaty of Versailles. The result was first frustration and then a new outburst of fanatical Pan-Germanism. Let us consider what has been done, and what may, perhaps, be suggested, in order to achieve a better result this time.

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The cardinal point of the problem concerns the future German territory. While it was a matter of course that the conquered countries, including Austria, were to be restored, the drawing of the new German frontiers in the East and West remains a problem bristling with doubts. The most critical question is that of the Eastern frontier, inasmuch as it now involves not merely Danzig and the districts with a mixed Polish, Czech, and German population, but also territories inhabited exclusively by Germans. In a firmly established Commonwealth of Nations, in which every close ethnological community, however small or isolated, could live its own life as an independent administrative unit, under Home Rule, and with equal rights in every respect, a case like that of the East Prussian enclave—with an exclusively German pre-war population of two and a half millions, separated from the Reich by the so-called Polish Corridor—would not have offered any difficulty. The fact, in particular, that many centuries ago the East Prussian soil was "stolen" by the German knights, would not now carry any great weight. The question of the annexation of other, purely German frontier districts, not forming enclaves, could not even emerge. Far removed, as we are, from such an ideal world, the whole problem has to be approached from a different starting-point. The history of the Polish Corridor—so laboriously created after the Great War, in accordance with the principle of nationalities, having regard for the rights of national minorities, and yet so unsatisfactory in its political and economic sequels—has shown the insufficiency, in present circumstances, of all such over-artificial solutions. National sentiment has proved far too strong a ferment of decomposition to permit of any fresh attempt to overcome ethnological difficulties by way of minority statutes or similar remedies—



at any rate where Germans are concerned. It must be a leading principle—to be applied not merely to the Eastern frontier—that no substantial German minority settlements or enclaves should remain in neighbour countries, thus forming the pretext for a new propaganda for “liberation and return.” Indeed, no reasonable statesman could be prepared to see the national unity of his country continually endangered by troublesome German minorities.

On the basis of this principle, the settlement of the question of East Prussia was fairly clear: as the Polish districts which separate that province from the *Reich* must, at all events, for ethnological, political, and moral reasons, return to Polish hands, no other practical solution would have been imaginable than the amputation of East Prussia from Germany, and, so far as Russia did not lay claim to such parts as adjoin Soviet territory, it was obvious that this untenable German exclave must fall to Poland. This solution contains, beyond doubt, an element of just reparation, with respect to the devastation which Germany has wrought on Polish soil, and it may further give some satisfaction that Poland, with large parts of her former territory inevitably falling to Russia, thus obtains a territorial compensation. Incidentally, the amputation of this “Junkers’ paradise,” with its numerous latifundia, may also have a salutary after-effect upon social and economic developments in post-war Germany, inasmuch as it goes a long way toward undermining the powerful position of the “ruling classes.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the amputation of East Prussia should be adopted with the sober realisation that the transfer to another nation of a large district inhabited by an ethnologically homogeneous population of a different race and language remains, on principle, a highly inconvenient matter. It must not lightly be regarded either as a well-deserved “punishment” of Germany, or as a proper means of recompense, which might also be applicable where the geographical position is different. Historical experience has shown that the spiritual repercussions of similar annexations have often survived for generations, and—apart from any moral considerations above the “*tu quoque*” level<sup>2</sup>—prudence should make it plain that only paramount reasons of security and economy—in other words, shortcomings resulting from the non-existence of a fully-developed supernational World Union—can justify such measures. This leading principle must not be lost to sight when—apart from the East Prussian exclave—the question comes up for final decision, where the future Polish-German frontier has to be drawn. The proposed assignment of wide and purely German districts of Silesia and Pomerania to Poland must

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 299-301

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 204

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evoke misgivings in anybody who takes a long-term view and longs for peace and reconciliation in a future better world. Indeed, wherever, in the East or West, the problem arises of the transfer of German boundary districts, the greatest caution should be observed. It would be premature and outside the scope of this book to go into further details. But it may at least be mentioned that in quite a number of cases even the security problem may be better solvable by other means<sup>1</sup> than by improving a "strategic frontier," all the more so as "strategic frontiers" had lost much of their former importance through the development of air power, even before they became almost meaningless with the discovery of the atomic bomb

So far, however, as such annexations are inevitable, then, indeed, they must be accompanied by the compulsory re-migration of almost the entire German population, just as the repatriation of the Sudeten-Germans and a great part of those living in the settlements in Hungary and Rumania<sup>2</sup> will be unavoidable, with respect to the popular feeling in the liberated countries and, on the other hand, to the "Hitlerism" shown by the majority of Germans both at home and abroad. It would be foolish to deny that such uprooting means bitter, and in many individual cases perhaps unmerited, hardship, and it is true also that the frequently quoted example of the ending of the historic hostility between Greeks and Turks, once the exchange of their national minorities was complete, does not constitute a full proof that the same thing will happen in the German case. But there is no practicable alternative, and if, according to the Berlin agreement, and after the deplorable events of the initial stages, the transfers are effected in an "orderly and humane manner," a gradual acquiescence and reconciliation might be expected in the course of time—provided that, after the return of millions of Germans to a much smaller "living space," a reasonable standard of life can still be maintained in Germany.<sup>3</sup> It needs no saying, on the other hand, that inadequately prepared and ruthlessly effected mass expulsions not only could not be justified—in the "tu quoque" manner<sup>4</sup>—by pointing to the methods which the Germans have themselves applied, but that the death of thousands on the roads and the unnecessary sufferings of millions of precipitately expelled returners must needs produce highly undesirable repercussions which for a long time may poison the atmosphere and paralyse the spirit of international collaboration which is so urgently needed in the construction of a "better world."

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 289, 294

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 258-259

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 297-302

<sup>4</sup>Cf p 204

After the amputations in the East and, perhaps, of some Western districts, we have to deal with a block of 60 million souls, a block once "welded together," by Bismarck, from very dissimilar ethnological groups. The fact that they all speak German dialects means very little as regards the question of their national homogeneity. As little as the United States and Canada, because of their mainly English-speaking populations, desire to form one State, so little have the South American Republics, with Spanish as their common language, felt compelled to amalgamate, so that the common German language is hardly a justification for the assertion that all Germans must form one Reich by the will of God. Historically or racially<sup>1</sup> one cannot prove any such necessity. The old "Holy Roman Empire of the Germans" was composed of many nations of many different races. It had completely fallen asunder into a great number of German and non-German States by the beginning of the 19th century. The ensuing revival of the "dream of German unity" was, as we have seen, inspired mainly by the economic inconveniences resulting from "Kleinstaaterei"—some of the "sovereignties" being positive pigmies, which, of course, nobody could wish to restore. These practical difficulties had been met, as regards North Germany, in the early sixties of the last century, by the foundation of a customs union, and, by including the South, they could very well have been solved in the same way for the totality of the German territory. But, after the Austro-Prussian war, Bismarck wished to impose definitively the Prussian military and political hegemony upon the lesser German States. Thus Hanover, Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel, which had participated in the war on the wrong side, were forthwith annexed, with the simple "justification" that their countries were "needed,"<sup>2</sup> inasmuch as they formed the natural connection between the main territory of Prussia and her Western possessions, while the remaining small monarchies and "Free" Hanse cities in North Germany, all being now completely surrounded, had humbly to accept the rôle of Prussian vassal States. Bismarck's enforced creation of the *Reich*, in 1871, was simply the extension of the expansionist Prussian power policy to South Germany, as soon as the time had become ripe therefor by the victorious war with France. The "welding together by blood and iron of the whole of Germany" meant virtually the swallowing by Prussia of the rest of the Reich.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 7, 96

<sup>2</sup>The parallelism between Hitler's power policy and the Prussian tradition appears here most strikingly. Bismarck's aforesaid "justification" of his annexations corresponds exactly with Hitler's argument for the attack upon the Polish Corridor, because the separation of East Prussia from the Reich was "intolerable and contrary to German national honour." Cf p 154

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 16-18, 52

However, as we have mentioned before,<sup>1</sup> a good proportion of the population of the smaller German States, like many of their princes, had only rather reluctantly put up with Bismarck's forcible mode of "realising the Barbarossa dream." How little the military and political rule of the King of Prussia responded originally to their popular feeling appears unmistakably from the fact that Bismarck himself was extremely anxious to preserve the shadow-existences of the ancestral dynasties "as far as possible"—i.e., in so far as open annexation seemed to him to be unnecessary in order to achieve his purpose. He observed this prudence by no means merely in order to "uphold the dynastic principle," but also to spare the *national* sentiments of the subjects of the smaller States. But for all this kind consideration, many people — above all in the recklessly annexed districts of Hesse, Hanover and Brunswick—never fully recognised the change of nationality and dynasty. When others, influenced by the economic prosperity of Bismarck's Reich, were reconciled with events, and while the youth of the annexed districts, artificially inflamed with Pan-Germanism, generally felt themselves to be neo-Prussians, or merely Germans, there were still many who liked to emphasise the fact that in the German wars of liberation their ancestors had fought not under Blücher, but under Wellington, and who continued to resent their enforced Prussianisation. The writer, who lived for many years in these districts, can confirm the fact that such feelings were still very much alive when the Great War started. They reappeared immediately after that war, when the impression of the German defeat was still fresh. Indeed, a few decades, or even a century, do not mean very much in history, especially as regards the spiritual and cultural assimilation of nations. It is a well-known fact that many South Germans or Rhinelanders harboured a profound aversion to the "Saupreußen," for whose manners, style, and methods they could feel nothing but dislike. Officials drawn from the West of Germany, who were transferred to the old Prussian districts, invariably experienced a temperamental difficulty in accommodating themselves to the so-called "Prussian peculiarities," and longed to get back to their Western home, even if they could obtain only a minor post there. Religion, habits of life, and even *Weltanschauung* — except, of course, the newly-inculcated common "philosophy" of Nazism — had always been so entirely different in Brandenburg, Baden, Westphalia, Bavaria, Mecklenburg, and Saxony—to cite only the strongest contrasts—that it is hardly justifiable to speak even of a cultural community, let alone an "inseparable national unity," of the whole of Germany. What has

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 19

the Catholic Bavarian in common with the Lutheran or irreligious Prussian, or the Mecklenburgian farmer with the industrial labourers and manufacturers in Saxony? They have had no common history, and no similar social and economic development. Their ancestors fought on different sides in many wars up to 1866; and the dialects are so much at variance in the more distant parts of Germany that the men in the street actually would not understand one another. More, so many essential distinctions in the law and in administrative practice existed until quite recently that, up to the time of the Great War, lawyers were not even free to practise in any part of Germany. The dissolution of the independent administrations of the individual States was completed only by the Nazis, and their costly and preposterous mixture of State and Party mechanism would make total reorganisation a sheer necessity merely for technical reasons, quite apart from the political ones.

Thus we cannot share the opinion that "a deep-seated general will to preserve a united Reich" must necessarily set at naught every attempt to restore some really homogeneous, medium-sized German States, which—with or without forming a German customs-union—could maintain themselves as sound and vital communities in a new economically reorganised Europe, just as well as Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and many others. True, it is not yet ten years since the plebiscite in the Saar district took place, which seems to point in a different direction. But then Hitlerism was at its height, and every German was in feverish expectation of the golden age.

The question of a division of the Reich centres around the problem of an independent Rhineland State. When, after the Great War, this suggestion was raised, an immense "national" opposition at once arose in Germany. Significantly enough, it was comparatively feeble in the Rhineland itself. The true explanation was not, as was alleged, an unfair "pressure" by the occupying powers, but simply the fact that in the occupied zone the separatists could be less easily suppressed and intimidated by nationalistic tumult. The storm of opposition in unoccupied Germany was, to a great extent, an artificial product of Pan-German chauvinism! and it was further aggravated by anxieties with respect to the potential economic consequences of a separation, an argument which would lose its weight if, at the time of the plebiscite, the problem of international economic collaboration has been satisfactorily settled.

By mentioning a plebiscite we have already anticipated that, in our opinion, this is the way in which the question of a dissolution of the rest of the *Reich* must be approached, all the more so as no cogent

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security reasons demand a forcible partition.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is one thing to order the evacuation of the German population and the cession to another State of an exclave, as East Prussia, or of certain boundary districts which for paramount reasons cannot be left in German hands, it would be quite a different matter to declare that the purely German population of a large area such as the Rhineland—a population which can neither be removed or replaced—must form a separate State. Such a separation constitutes by its nature a problem of Home Rule which ultimately can be solved only by a free decision of the people itself. An enforced partition, reluctantly accepted under pressure, must inevitably bring about new tension; and few probably in this and other countries would be prepared, after twenty years or more, merely for the sake of principle, to prevent by force a reunion which would not of itself mean an immediate danger to the peace of the world

Years must elapse before a plebiscite, or plebiscites, will be possible, and furious opposition may arise anew against any further division of the Reich. While no open or secret terrorism against those who hold different opinions could be tolerated, it would be unwise to muzzle the "patriots," or to make any martyrs. A potential renaissance of smaller German States must not be exposed to the reproach that an "involuntary dismemberment of the rest of Germany has been achieved by unfair methods." However, there are good reasons to stick to the opinion that, when men's minds have composed themselves, and the disaster which Pan-Germanism has brought about clearly appears, in its full magnitude, the question might be considered in a sober aspect, and the instinctive, and sometimes almost hysterical antipathy betrayed even by many exiled German democrats against a partition of the Reich may disappear

Distinguished politicians have ventured the opinion that some sort of autonomy and decentralised administration of the former German States would better answer to the sentiments of many Germans than a total dissolution of the Reich, or a complete political separation of large districts, particularly in the West and South, from a remaining rump Reich. A certain passage in the report on the Conference of Berlin seems to be based on similar ideas. But a vivid imagination would indeed be necessary to discover a practical advantage, as regards the international position of Germany, in such a mere change of her constitution as would maintain a more or less close political unity. It would be by no means plain even that the spirit of Prussianism would be more easily overcome in a federal Reich, or that a mere administrative decentralisation would help very greatly to foster that highly desirable "diversity of political and cultural life"

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 293-294

which some prominent British promoters of this solution would expect<sup>1</sup> A renewed centripetal movement might well be the result. However that may be, it seems rather improbable that the British suggestion of such a "compromise" would really suit the German mentality<sup>2</sup> They will prefer a radical solution to a more or less academic alteration. It is not wishful thinking, but sober realism which leads us to believe that strong separatist movements may emerge, not only in the Rhineland, but in many parts of Germany, as soon as a new economic order should prove those to be mistaken who still believe that a united Reich must offer any direct or indirect material advantage The reader is aware of the political opportunism of the Germans, he knows how little idealism was behind the high words and the mystical "dream" of their unity Once the more easy-going population of Western and Southern Germany is convinced that in the economic field the same facilities will be enjoyed by great and small States alike, they will, in all probability, choose rather full State independence than membership in a federal Reich To solve the economic problem of Europe is therefore the crucial matter If this precondition is assured, the disintegration of the Reich may be effected from within much more quickly than one is inclined to believe at present; the more so when the populations of the districts concerned begin to feel that the distrust of the neighbouring peoples might be more readily overcome if the Prusso-German colossus should completely disappear Indeed, our scepticism must not prevent us from admitting that a deliberate self-liquidation of that heterogeneous complex which, created by force, resting on force, and permanently using force, has brought nothing but disaster to the world, would be an invaluable contribution towards a peaceable and united Europe, and a happy sign of a progressing change of mind in Germany.

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The security problem has briefly to be touched within the scope of this book, because demilitarisation—which already in itself means an extremely heavy blow to the military-minded and uniform-loving<sup>3</sup> German people—must needs produce manifold social, economic, and psychological repercussions which in their turn must influence the task of remoulding the German mind.

Certain lessons could be derived from the mental attitude shown, after the Great War, not only by the military and such industrialists as were directly affected by the then — much too weak — disarmament

<sup>1</sup>Cf *The Times*, December 10th, 1943 (Leader), and December 15th and 18th, 1943. Letters to the Editor

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 216, 282-283

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 16, 61-64

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ment measures, but also by the people as a whole<sup>1</sup> The Conference of Berlin has drawn the appropriate conclusions from the fact that, after 1918, disarmament and demilitarisation were turned into a farce, and that the "small professional army" which was allowed after the 1914 war quickly became the nucleus of rearmament and the centre of all those powers in Germany which aimed at the maintaining of the spirit of militarism. The statement issued after the Conference says: "(a) All German land, naval, and air forces, the S.S., S.A., S.D., and Gestapo, with all their organisations, staffs, and institutions, the Officers' Corps, Reserve Corps, military schools, war veterans' organisations, and all other military and semi-military organisations, together with all clubs and associations which serve to keep alive military tradition in Germany, shall be completely and finally abolished in such a manner as permanently to prevent the revival or reorganisation of German militarism and Nazism. (b) All arms, ammunition, and implements of war, and all specialised facilities for their production shall be held at the disposal of the Allies or destroyed. The maintenance or production of all aircraft and all arms, ammunition, and implements of war shall be prevented" The agreement is so comprehensive, indeed, that all the loopholes which had been left open after the 1914 war seem to be closed<sup>2</sup> The plan also gives the possibility to control the activities of German scientists, and not only to forbid research work of any dangerous kind, such as, e.g., on atomic energy, but also to ensure that new discoveries and inventions shall not be kept secret—and eventually misused. Past experiences<sup>3</sup> make it an obvious necessity, indeed, to look behind every curtain and to turn every stone But anyone who had the opportunity of observing the efficiency with which the Nazis enforced their measures against internal "enemies of the State" is also entitled to assert that, with a sufficient amount of energy and care, it will be possible to carry our intentions into effect, and really to get to the bottom of the whole conspiracy, in spite of the most ingenious subterfuges

The purpose and extent of the industrial disarmament policy have been aptly defined in the report of the Sub-Committee (the so-called Kilgore Committee) of the U.S.A. Senate Military Affairs Committee<sup>4</sup>: "To crush German imperialism permanently and thus permit a peaceful and democratic Germany to arise, the structure and control of German industry must be so altered that it cannot again serve the purpose of war" This statement, which implicitly

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 25-34

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 322-323

<sup>3</sup>Cf Brigadier-General T. H. Morgan's book, *Assize of Arms*, 1945

<sup>4</sup>Cf p 298 note 3



was adopted at the Conference of Berlin, was at the same time a valuable reminder that the sole aim of disarmament is security, and nothing else, and that no motive beyond this purpose must be permitted to confuse the decision as to what must be demanded under the head of checking Germany's war potential. The security problem has its own merits. They are independent of, and sometimes even contradictory to, other aspects which come into play with regard to the post-war treatment of Germany, and which presently have to be considered. It needs no saying that, in general, the security problem is of overriding importance. E.g. the argument that Germany's capacity for making reparations might suffer if her primary industries were "crippled" must obviously give way to the more essential purpose of safety. On the other hand, a country's war potential comprises almost the whole not only of its primary, but also of its engineering and chemical industries. Motor vehicles, locomotives, tractors, wireless and optical apparatus, and many other things which constitute the bulk of normal peace-time production, play an ever-increasing part as regards the equipment of a modern army. Almost every engineering and chemical factory can quickly be turned over to war production, indeed, the greater part of munitions in this and other countries has been produced, during this war, in ordinary engineering and other factories. Therefore we cannot expect fully to destroy Germany's war potential without resorting to dangerous extremes which might lead to the creation of a first-rate social morass in the middle of Europe<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the principles governing the industrial disarmament of Germany could be defined at the Berlin Conference in rather general terms only, and that, eventually, it must depend on a close examination by the experts how far, in addition to the specialist armaments factories, other German industries actually must be destroyed, or transferred to other countries for the sake of security; and how far security might be achieved by other means, such as regulating the import of raw materials, and, in particular, restricting Germany's oil supplies, in order to prevent her from accumulating a war reserve. As to the heavy industries concentrated in the Saar, Ruhr, and Rhine districts, it even may be inevitable to keep these parts indefinitely under international administration—if a plebiscite should not lead to the creation of an independent Rhineland State.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the large industrial combines have to be split into their units, while we have to make sure that no collusive co-operation between the separated units—each of them being able,

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 295-299

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 289-290

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perhaps, to produce a specific part of a prohibited instrument of war—frustrates our measures. Future German investments in other countries—the existing ones will, anyhow, be confiscated for reparation purposes<sup>1</sup>—must be kept under supervision, in order to break up the highly-developed German system of creating international cartels and maintaining a dominating influence over them. In no case must it happen again, as it did between the wars, that German concerns, by setting up subsidiaries in “neutral” countries and transferring to them their licenses, secret processes, and patents, dodge the imposed restrictions and continue to menace the peace of the world by producing war materials abroad, or retaining the means of returning to such production. All this, obviously, demands a very intense and lasting control of the whole of Germany’s industrial activities through an elaborate apparatus which, in order to be effective, must be supported by military power. Thus, when it may be finally decided to withdraw the armies of occupation, strong military air bases may still have to be maintained in Germany for a further period, either by the Allies, or by the United Nations Organisation.

It is easily understood that not only the material, but also the spiritual and moral effect of such far-reaching measures must be considerable. Already the crushing defeat, with the enemy this time in every part of the “fatherland,” was bound to produce an immensely deeper impression than that of 1918<sup>2</sup> upon a nation whose whole mentality was based on the creed of their invincibility and superiority, and which is now faced with the complete débâcle of all that they had adored — with the aspect of their destroyed towns, factories, shops, and homes, with all the humiliating concomitant phenomena of the occupation, and with enormous difficulties in every walk of life, particularly as regards the feeding of the masses. True, according to the reports of many observers, the first reaction of the average citizens was merely exasperation and anger at the loss of the war, while they remained extraordinarily blind to their own responsibility for the misfortune that has overtaken them<sup>3</sup>. This was to be expected with respect to the whole German mentality. But the more excitement gives room to dejection the more must the Germans come to feel—in addition to their own wretched conditions of life—the loss of their dead, and the misery of their disabled men and the millions of “returners” from the ceded provinces and former German settlements abroad. In such a mood and situation it must dawn, one would think, even upon the primitive mind that they have

<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 296 and clause 18 of the Berlin Agreement of July, 1945

<sup>2</sup>Cf p. 65

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 233, 239, 246, 248

brought their fate upon themselves by their militarism, Pan-Germanism, and Hitlerism. Reflections of such kind must all the more arise, inasmuch as the man in the street was always well aware of the real meaning of his "fight for German honour and the liberation of the brothers abroad."<sup>1</sup> In such conditions the unflinching execution of demilitarisation and disarmament—the dismissal of the officers, the demolition of the factories of the armament magnates, the dissolution of the well-known industrial combines, and the amputation of the Prussian *Junkers' paradise*—should also help to prepare the ground for re-education, by diverting the thoughts of the masses from an evidently hopeless militarism to more useful activities

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This brings us to the economic and social side of the German problem, including the question of reparations. To deal, beforehand, with the latter problem, it is not only an obvious necessity and demand of elementary justice in the interest of the wronged peoples and robbed individuals, but also a matter of eminent importance with regard to the remoulding of the German mind, that all that is possible must be done by the Germans to make good at least part of the damage for which they are collectively responsible.<sup>2</sup> It is a truism that no war indemnity, in the sense of an adequate compensation for the expenses of the Allies in waging the war, could be imposed, in view of the impossibility of raising—and transferring—the fantastic sums involved, which have been calculated to amount to £2 500 for every German, man, woman and child. But the Crimea decision—now confirmed by the Berlin Conference—that Germany has "to make compensation in kind to the best of her ability" for the loss and sufferings that she has caused to the United Nations, particularly in the conquered and enslaved countries, was, indeed, a matter of course. For no one could expect the municipalities and the individual victims of German savagery to forego their rights to adequate reparation. Incidentally, it should not be forgotten that the same principle must apply to Hitler's earliest victims inside Germany, the "enemies of the State and Jews," who were first "legally" blackmailed, then totally expropriated, and, finally, either murdered or ejected by the Nazis. These robbed and exiled Germans have so far not even an official representative to speak for them.<sup>3</sup>

As a measure to restore public morality, and also in order to get hold of some of the best realisable values, not only the immediate thieves—who, as war criminals, will be deprived by the Allied mili-

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 151-155

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 234-235

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 124-131

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tary courts of the stolen property<sup>1</sup> — but every German, and his potential helpers and dummies in neutral countries, should be forced to deliver up his booty, who before or during the war, inside Germany or in the enslaved countries, in any way took advantage of the illegal or semi-legal Nazi measures, or has, since 1933, accumulated a fortune by way of profiteering. This applies, above all, to those German representatives of wealth who were first the accoucheurs of Nazism and, later on, the main profiteers by the innumerable crooked transactions redolent of blackmail, theft, and bribery. With the necessary skill the hidden investments of many of these gentlemen can be discovered and attached, and means and ways can be found to see to it that the ordinary laws of neutral States cannot be misused to protect the loot.<sup>2</sup>

The main part of the reparation, of course, must come from the German people as a whole, and the cession of a fifth—or even more—of the former German territory would be a very substantial “reparation in kind,” indeed. Apart from this, according to the plan of Berlin, the reparation shall consist mainly in the delivery of raw materials and the “removal” of capital equipment. However, in order to avoid disillusion, we have to face the fact that the economic position of Germany as a whole is no better than that of the most devastated parts of Europe. Certain raw materials, of course, are available, although it should be mentioned that timber, for instance, which has been named as one of those commodities which the Germany could supply in large quantities, was so scarce already before the war, that, under Goering’s first four years plan, in many districts the road trees had to be felled, and replaced by saplings. The livestock and farm implements on the remaining German territory are urgently needed to prevent immediate starvation.

As to industrial capital equipment, the plan says: “Productive capacity not needed for permitted production shall be removed.”<sup>3</sup> The Inter-Allied Control Commission will determine the amount and character of equipment unnecessary for the future German

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 308

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 39-40, 43, 161-165, 191-192

<sup>3</sup>One point deserves special mention in this context. The Berlin communiqué says nothing as to the compensation, by the Germans themselves, of the “returners” and the owners of “removed” machinery for their losses. The Treaty of Versailles had made provisions as to similar cases. Considering the Russian Communist ideology, it may be no mere coincidence that this problem has not been settled so far. Of course, not all the returners and manufacturers or shareholders, whose capital equipment has been, or will be, removed under the Berlin Agreement, are war criminals. It would be contrary to our conception of private property, and regrettable in the interest of re-education, if even might contribute considerably to a leftist radicalisation of Germany, if all these people were to be proletarianised forcibly, or if the question of their indemnification were left entirely to the discretion of the Germans. Similar considerations apply to the problem of “land reform” in the Russian zone (Cf p 279).

peace economy, and the report gives a hint as to what extent German industries may be rebuilt. It declares that "in organising the German economy primary emphasis shall be given to the development of agriculture and peaceful domestic industries," and that "the German average living standard shall not exceed the average of the European countries," not counting Britain or the U S S R. Considering the repeated assertions that "it is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people," and "that the Germans shall be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis," it may be taken for granted that such extremes as were indicated by the plan attributed to Mr Morgenthau — to reduce Germany to a primitive agricultural community—are out of the question.

If it is intended, as it seems to be, that the German peace economy shall be stabilized temporarily at a level a little below that of 1927-1929, and the average living standard somewhere between the Swedish and the Balkan, the Germans certainly could not complain, while, on the other hand, after the intensive industrial drives before and during the war, a substantial amount of machinery would be available for reparation. If it is true, however, that in the wide districts occupied by Russia the factories have been completely stripped, it would be extremely difficult to see how Germany, after the loss of her most fertile districts in the East, and with her great towns and many of the smaller ones in ruins, should be able to feed and maintain her normal population—even on a standard similar to that of the Balkan—to say nothing of absorbing eight or more millions of returners.

In such circumstances the use of German labour for reconstruction work abroad appears in a new aspect. It is, indeed, the most natural way of making amends—this particularly with regard to the fact that most of the German factories are unable immediately to turn out commodities for reparation, while the repair work in the foreign countries must have priority. While many of Germany's neighbouring peoples may not wish to see German workers, others will insist that German labour must restore what German hands have destroyed. It is not very probable, with respect to the German food situation, that the demand for German workers will surpass the supply of volunteers all the more so as, for years to come, the great safety-valve of emigration will be open only to a very small number of Germans. If, nevertheless, the problem of compulsory conscription should arise, there would be, on principle, no reason to stop short before such a measure, if it were carried out in an orderly manner.

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so that no new form of slavery would be created<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the very requirements of German re-education would justify a temporary restriction of such liberties as the free choice of work, that, in normal conditions, we regard as the natural right of every mature man;<sup>2</sup> and all classes of Germans alike must be made to feel most drastically that they have to contribute their share in reparation of the damage they have done

A high British authority enjoying a just reputation for understatement has been credited with the assertion that in post-war Germany "at least" five millions of inhabitants would starve to death Even if this gloomy prediction should prove, in the end, to have been exaggerated, it throws a spotlight on the situation It is apparent, at all events, that an extremely dangerous period of transition lies ahead, a period during which social and economic pressure in Germany must far exceed those similar phenomena which, together with their inherent political perils, we are observing in some of the liberated European countries There, at least, in contrast to the German case, a certain spiritual alleviation, owing to the inspiration which springs from the sympathy of the outward world and the immediate hope for a better future, may act as a counterpoise Thus, if we wish to avoid a complete physical and social breakdown in Germany with all its consequences, and, in particular, a rapid political radicalization, we should see to it, before it is too late, that the economic chaos does not become too great.

But what matters is not merely the first time of transition from war to peace A high degree of common sense will indeed be necessary to reconcile the methods of reparation, and of a really reformatory penalisation of the Germans, with the requirement that no focus of social epidemics ought to be created in Central Europe<sup>3</sup> When it is the main task of the whole post-war period to promote the social and economic restoration of Europe, it must not be overlooked that Germany, too, will continue to be a European factor The practical consequences must be drawn from the generally accepted notion that the welfare of the continent is indivisible, like its peace, and that the mutual interdependence is so close that, apart from minor and temporary variations, there can be, in the long run, only a common peaceful prosperity of the European nations or unrest and war We have already stated our opinion that it was a great mistake

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<sup>1</sup>No reliable reports are available, so far, as to the conditions in which German labourers are said to be employed with reconstruction work in Russia

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 311-313

<sup>3</sup>Cf the report of the Kilgore Committee, quoted on p 292, and President Roosevelt's report to Congress of March 1st, 1945 "We do not want the German people to starve or to become a burden to the rest of the world"

that after the last war no proper measures were taken to prevent economic and social decay in Germany, while, on the other hand the security problem was handled much too complacently. The previous generation has observed the contrast between the developments in Germany, where, after the Great War, an unscrupulous propaganda found it easy to excite the fury of the "have-nots," and in South Africa, where the economic magnanimity of Britain towards a conquered and exasperated people gave proof of its psychological efficiency. As "freedom" first acquires a meaning for the more primitive individual on his participation in the amenities of life, the victors—in their own interest, and in spite of what the Germans have done to us—must, to some extent, help the defeated aggressor in the economic field. After the elimination of dangerous industries and, after an inevitable and educative period of repression and probation, it must be the aim to re-develop the truly peaceful German industries, under an efficient international control, but free from such restrictions as are not necessary any longer in the interest of security, so that, eventually, the Germans may find full employment and satisfactory living conditions on their own soil, and can make their country a useful component in a prosperous continent. This method also will prove a most impressive means of re-education, and, if the liberated countries make proper use of their start, by way of developing their production and modernising their industries on the basis of a well-planned system of international collaboration, there is no reason to suspect that Germany might soon regain an undesirable economic lead.

The complex problem of fitting the Germans into a comity of collaborating nations demands the creation of a new *economic* democracy in Germany which, together with the political one, must constitute the basis for the gradual building up of a peaceful popular frame of mind. We have in other contexts<sup>1</sup> pointed to the tendencies of certain exponents of international wealth who strove obstinately to "shorten the war" by promoting a compromise, if not with the Nazi chiefs, then at least with the representatives of the former German "ruling classes." A much discussed article by a well-known American journalist<sup>2</sup> reminded us that tendencies of such a kind were still very much alive in the fourth year of the

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 235-237, 267, 311

<sup>2</sup>Mr Kingsbury Smith in the *American Mercury*. Cf also the statement of Mr Sidney Hillman, of the American Congress of Industrial Organisations, made on February 12th, 1945, at the World Trades Union Conference in London. "The forces of reaction in our own countries do not want Fascism utterly destroyed. Even now, they are jockeying for positions from which to launch a new imperialist scramble for power." The indictment of some leading German bankers and industrialists as war criminals (cf p 308) and the breaking up of some big trusts—such as, e.g., the "I G Farbenindustrie"—may be regarded as the initial steps to throw open the long way to a genuine economic democracy.

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war. This should be a warning to all those who are aware of the great danger involved in the theory that "a mere difference of political *ideologies* ought not to prevent economic co-operation." Since it was the express aim of the previous chapters to prove that the German "world-philosophy" is anything other than an *ideology* in the popular connotation of the word, that it is impossible to live peaceably in the same world with the exponents of this or any similar doctrine of robbery, and that no final solution can be achieved save by extirpating the very roots of the evil, and subsequently controlling and re-educating the Germans until they have become a people of decent and democratic mentality<sup>1</sup>—no further words need to be wasted on explaining that no honest German collaboration in the striven-for "better world" would be imaginable if the powerful position of one of the traditional main pillars of Pan-German expansionism—the industrial magnates—were, somehow or other, restored with the assistance of international capital.<sup>2</sup> Here, indeed, no compromise should be imaginable—such as, e.g., a suggested partial transfer of the shares of the great combines into foreign hands without the complete elimination of the influence of the German "captains of industry" upon the management. As we have indicated before, the real reason why this dangerous problem cannot be understood by the exponents of international wealth, and why, indeed, they are unable to feel as we do about the deeper issue of this war, is simply that they do not share our democratic ideals, that, in their *sacro egoismo*, they will never realise that there are things of greater significance than their own vested interests. The menace of a recrudescence of "diehardism" in Germany may appear less acute, at this moment, than the threat of Communism. But the German industrial barons, asserting their own indispensability and trying to make themselves seem attractive partners, are still heavily engaged in the attempt to regain as much as possible of their former position in those parts of Germany which are occupied by the Western democracies. Even after the final disappearance of the *Junkers'* and officers' caste,<sup>3</sup> a peaceful democratic evolution in Germany might still be seriously hampered by this group of unteachable reactionaries. The old struggle between *vested interests*, in the evil sense of the word, and democratic progress, will for some time to come continue to trouble politicians, economists, and sociologists in many countries. But in no circumstances must vested interests of this kind be permitted to reinstate their powers afresh in

<sup>1</sup>Cf the very outspoken statements of Mr Cordell Hull and Mr Stettinius quoted on p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Cf Sir Walter Citrine's speech of February 9th, 1945, at the World Trade Union Conference.

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 284, 292, 295.



#### CATACLYSM—RECONSTRUCTION—RE-EDUCATION

Germany, and thereby, to say the least, considerably aggravate the winning of the peace.

"To widen the meaning of democracy by extending it from political to economic life is the most urgent task of the coming generation . . . Industry is a social function, its success is to be judged not by dividends, but by the services which it renders . . . Workers must have a voice in determining the conditions on which it is to be carried on" These words of Mr John G Winant, U.S. Ambassador to Britain,<sup>1</sup> should form the spiritual basis for the reconstruction of Germany's economic life. The masses of the German people must be made conscious that they are responsible for assuring that the economy of their country is operated in the future in a way which serves simultaneously their own national prosperity and that of the world. If we wish to ensure the honest economic collaboration of Germany, we must not confine ourselves to allowing the Germans the restoring of their peaceful industries to working order—we must see to it, at the same time, that the ulterior purpose, the building up of a true economic democracy, is achieved. One of the means of realising this aim is to restore to the employees and workmen, in an improved form, a right that they possessed already under the Weimar Republic<sup>2</sup> to have, in all trades of a certain minimum size, a number of freely chosen representatives on the board of directors. But this, of course, is only one of the steps which must be taken in order to prevent a handful of wealthy magnates from again ruling over the more or less unhappy masses, with the peril of either a new nationalist outbreak or social revolution continually lurking in the background. Broad social strata of sound, contented and reasonable middle-class and working men are needed in Germany, no less than everywhere else, as the future bearers of a genuinely democratic mentality. Having experienced twelve years of slavery under totalitarian rule, which for many of them were certainly not too pleasant, and having passed through a terrible time of confusion and depression in the first years of transition after this war, the Germans may be better able to appreciate the conditions of life in a democratic State which does not claim to exist for its own sake, but will serve the welfare of all its citizens and of mankind. But it is obvious that this will be appreciated only if the Germans feel assured that, before long, the principle of "freedom from want" is to be extended to a new and democratic Germany.

The immediate restoration of a strong German Labour Organisa-

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from a speech made at a meeting of the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes on the 6th October, 1944

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 111

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tion is an obvious requirement of a sound internal social development, and also of the honest co-operation of Germany in a planned future world economy. Workmen, German or non-German, merely by virtue of their ordinary experiences, are usually better aware than other classes of the importance of close collaboration with others in overcoming common difficulties. This spirit of natural and willing, internal and international, comradeship and readiness to help must be resuscitated and encouraged among German workers—and guided into the right direction. It was obviously on these grounds that, still in war-time, the London Office of the International Labour Organisation—in a comprehensive memorandum of April, 1944, to the Governing Body—made the valuable suggestion to appoint an International Labour Commissioner for Germany, to hold in trust the property of the Nazi "Labour Front" and its sub-organisations, and to draw on these funds in order to assist in the reconstruction of a Free Workers' Organisation. The negative attitude of the Governing Body was strongly influenced, as the debate showed, by the objectionable behaviour of the German working class in the past, and by the absence of any proof of a substantial underground movement of German labour.<sup>1</sup> It was argued by an eminent delegate—and this argument was also used at the World Trade Union Conference in London, 1945—that "repentance must come before forgiveness." Such considerations no doubt would form sound reasons for denying—for some time to come—the representatives of German Trade Unions the right to vote, and perhaps even to speak at international meetings, but they could hardly constitute an argument for the refusal of any assistance in the reconstruction of a German Labour Organisation, the more so since the Berlin Conference has encouraged the revival of the Trade Unions. For, in the German case, genuine repentance will assuredly not spring up spontaneously, while empty confessions would be utterly useless. A new German mentality can ripen only as a fruit of careful re-education. Meanwhile, however, a sound German Labour Organisation is badly needed. Indeed, the resurrected German Workers' Unions, if they are reasonably led, will be not merely the best, but, for a time, the only comparatively reliable pillars of economic and political democracy and stability in Germany, and they also constitute the natural mediums for the gradual re-education of their members. The danger is great—not for lack of money, but for lack of guidance—that, sooner or later, things might develop in the wrong direction if the German workers were to be left entirely to themselves. The former German Trade Unions are, perhaps, in a still worse position

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 170-173, 234-235, 279-281

than those in the liberated countries. For twelve years they have been suppressed and deprived of their leaders, and of all their institutions, and the spirit of their members has been methodically poisoned by the *Arbeitsfront*.<sup>1</sup> Assistance and guidance given by British and American Labour might prove a most profitable investment, which should help to ensure that the future of the world would not again be jeopardised from the direction of Germany, whether by the forces of social and political reaction or by the wild radicalism of a desperate working class. Sir Walter Citrine was right in saying<sup>2</sup>: "When the fighting is over the Trade Unions may be the factor which will initiate between the peoples the contacts that would remove the bitterness developed by the war and put them all together on the road to the new world."<sup>3</sup>

Concluding these few observations on the social and economic aspects of the German problem, it may be permitted once again to emphasise how much more easily a thorough and lasting influence upon the whole of Germany's future economic position could be maintained if, within the framework of the United Nations, something like a European Commonwealth should eventually emerge. The central administration of such a community, directing the entire production and distribution within the Continental area, and, from a superior viewpoint, co-ordinating the social and economic conditions of life in the individual member States—with Germany, for a considerable period of transition, confined to a passive membership—would be a much more efficient instrument than any Inter-Allied Control Commission for making the best possible use of the German capacity of production. It could, merely by using its legitimate economic and financial powers, permanently prevent any German evasions or undesirable escapades, any future dumping or other unfair competition, and nip in the bud any attempt at restoring cartels, etc., or at regaining by other means a new economic predominance. It could prohibit the restoration of any unsound form of capitalism and, at the same time, avert unemployment and starvation in Germany. But it could also stop the raising of the German average living standard above a decent level until Germany's liabilities have been properly discharged.

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The question of the punishment of the German war criminals, closely connected, as it is, with the problem of "reparation" in a

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 171, 183

<sup>2</sup>Speech to the Foreign Press Association before the opening of the World Trades Union Conference, 1945

<sup>3</sup>In October, 1945, it was announced in London that British Trade Union leaders would go to Berlin, in order to discuss with the British Authorities there, ways and means for the restoration of German Trade Unionism

#### THE GERMAN MENTALITY

wider sense, has for long ranked high in the interest of the public—in particular with regard to the complete failure of the attempt made after the last war to leave the punishment of their war culprits to the Germans themselves.<sup>1</sup> The bringing to account of the war criminals has, indeed, a still wider significance than that of paying due reverence to the feelings of innumerable individual sufferers, and to the popular sentiment throughout the whole non-totalitarian world. It touches directly upon both the fundamental issues of the peace problem: security and honest collaboration of the German people in the future.<sup>2</sup> To make these evildoers harmless and remove their poisonous influence from the sick body of the German nation is an obvious demand of self-protection; and the anticipated educative effect upon the Germans of a severe punishment of all political and common war crimes should also help us to lay the spiritual foundations of their future co-operation in the welfare of mankind.

The Moscow Declaration on German Atrocities, published on November 1st, 1943, had stated that the major war criminals whose crimes have no particular geographical localisation should be "punished by a joint decision of the Governments of the Allies." It seems that this formula was originally intended to exclude any judicial trial,<sup>3</sup> though the earlier so-called St. James Declaration of the representatives of nine countries, then occupied by the Germans, had expressly demanded that "all war criminals should be punished through the channel of organised justice." The latter declaration and the popular demand for a judicial trial were obviously influenced by the uneasy feeling that, otherwise, only detention for life might be imposed upon the highest culprits. In fact, there was no reason whatsoever why the "joint decision" of the Big Three should not have been a death sentence in many cases. Incidentally, as regards Hitler, it was extremely doubtful whether a judicial trial would have led to his condemnation. For the evidence given by the psychiatric experts might well have brought a trial to a precipitate end, because the defendant was shown to be insane, and this already at the time when the crimes were committed.<sup>4</sup> The Germans, suffering from a mass psychosis complementary to Hitler's paranoia,<sup>5</sup> would have laughed in their sleeves at such a "solution." The non-totalitarian world would never have accepted it willingly. Indeed, the objective guilt of the *Führer* was so obvious and so enormous

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 28

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 281

<sup>3</sup>Cf Mr Eden's statement in the House of Commons on March 28th, 1945

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 207-210

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp 227-229

that, if he had been captured, nothing but the extreme punishment could have satisfied the sound popular sense of justice outside of Germany, and produced a salutary effect upon the average German mind. If we put any confidence in our measures of re-education we ought not to be afraid that future German generations might have regarded the monster as a martyr. All the reasons which normally forbid the punishment of an insane man were superseded by higher considerations in this singular case. If the Romans had hanged Tiberius or Nero, without previous trial, they would, assuredly, not have been blamed by their contemporaries, nor would they stand exposed to censure in the eyes of history, because these evildoers were suffering from the megalomania of tyrants.

With the death of Hitler and Mussolini the question whether the leading war criminals were to be tried, or punished directly by the principal Allied Governments, had lost part of its significance. At any rate, there was no reason to believe that the megalomania of the other Nazi chieftains might excuse them from criminal responsibility in the eyes of a military court of law.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is not beyond doubt whether the high-spirited decision to grant the benefit of a judicial trial even to those major criminals whose guilt was crystal-clear, was indeed a happy one—not because of the misgivings of a few non-German politicians with regard to potential discussions in the publicity of a court of law as to their own former attitude towards Nazism and the Nazi leaders; but because of the danger that the courts might become the scenes of unending political disputes, and of a vast propaganda campaign on the part of the defendants — a possibility which would have been particularly undesirable with respect to the re-education of the German people, and which—as experience has shown—it is difficult to avoid, in spite of the declared principle of the London agreement of August 8th, 1945, that “the international military tribunal shall confine the trials strictly to an expedient hearing of the issues, and rule out irrelevant issues and statements of any kind whatsoever.” Once there were to be judicial trials, it was highly satisfactory, on the other hand, that punishment was not to be confined to “common” crimes, as had been suggested during the preceding discussions.<sup>2</sup> True, the danger

<sup>1</sup>It may be different in the case of Hess. If it is true that he has completely and irreparably lost his memory, it would be nonsensical to “try” him in the usual form, although his guilt is no less obvious than that of the dead Himmler, Goebbels and Ley. It should depend on the question whether his imbecility has developed into complete idiocy—so that execution would be too much like butchery—whether he only can be detained for life.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the debate in the House of Lords on March 20th, 1945. The standpoint of the Moscow Declaration was not perfectly clear, the wording—“Declaration on German *Atrocities*”—would indicate that the political crimes were not included.

of the trials becoming monster proceedings would thereby have diminished. True, also, the "common" war crimes of most of the leading German gangsters—such as the organising of murder and atrocities, mass deportations of foreign slave workers, etc. — were obviously more than sufficient to justify the severest sentences. Nevertheless, an uneasy feeling would have remained if the political offences had been passed over tacitly. Moreover, there were men, like Ribbentrop, whose co-responsibility for atrocities, etc., was more remote, or, at least, heavily overshadowed by their purely political delinquencies. It would have been highly regrettable—again particularly with regard to the re-education of the German people—if the cynical violation of treaties of non-aggression, the deliberate preparation and the final unleashing of the world war, in short, the participation in developing the whole evil "political" nucleus, from which the avalanche started that was intended to destroy the civilisation of the world, had been omitted from the indictment. Moreover, there were the "internal" political crimes of the Ministers of Justice, etc., Frank, Frick, Ley, and many other leading Nazi politicians, who were responsible for the monstrous discriminating laws and carried them into effect against "enemies of the State and Jews." The suggestion that the trials should be confined to "common" crimes was, indeed, irreconcilable with the popular sense of justice. It has been based, apparently, on a misinterpretation of the juridical axiom that no statesman must be punished for activities which, according to the law of his own country, did not constitute criminal offences. This theory, however, would not have protected the *self-appointed* Nazi leaders even in their own country, if there had been a democratic government—as little as the same doctrine protected the Quislings in the liberated countries. Moreover, the whole theory was obviously incompatible with the *natural* law of international justice.

The London agreement of August 8th, 1945, whose comprehensive "Charter" extended, and partly superseded, the Moscow "Declaration on German atrocities" and certain other preliminary conventions, has put an end to all such subtleties as regards the offences of major war criminals "which have no particular location," and thus are to be tried by the newly-established Inter-Allied Tribunal. The Charter includes political and common crimes alike of persons "acting in the interest of the European Axis countries" and committed before or during the war, inside or outside Germany, and without discrimination whether the victims were non-Germans, or German "enemies of the State," or Jews. It must be welcomed in particular, for the sake of German re-education, that the necessary conclusions have thus

been drawn from the notion that with the "seizure of power" by the Nazis a period of complete lawlessness started in Germany, whose obvious purpose it was to prepare the war of aggression, and which virtually formed already the first phase of the war.<sup>1</sup> The Charter makes it clear that leaders, organizers, and instigators of the criminal plan are no less responsible than its immediate perpetrators, and that the official position of the defendants as heads of governments or government departments shall not be considered as excluding them from responsibility or as mitigating punishment. On the other hand, the fact that a defendant acted pursuant to the order of a superior shall not excuse him, though it may be considered in mitigation of punishment. There is, indeed, hardly a loophole left through which a major war criminal might escape.

The Charter gives distinct but not too elaborate definitions—which would have blunted the sword of justice—and makes it plain that the trials of the major war criminals must be fair, but ought not to be hampered by over-exact rules of procedure. It might serve as an example for other charters which may be issued, in due course, by the various governments concerned to their respective national military and occupation courts, which have to deal with the many thousands of ordinary German war criminals. For the great majority of the offenders, ranking from *Gauleiters*, generals, and captains of industry to petty underlings, will be returned for trial to the countries where their crimes were committed, so that co-ordinated charters for the military courts of the individual nations are urgently needed, indeed. The criminal laws and the rules of procedure are so much at variance in the allied countries that, unless a certain co-ordination as to the treatment of the war criminals is achieved, it might depend often enough on the mere accident where a war crime was committed whether the defendant will suffer the severest penalty or escape altogether. The question of the admissibility of hearsay evidence, for instance—a problem of, probably, frequent occurrence, as the direct evidence may often enough have been deliberately destroyed by the Germans—is treated quite differently by the penal laws of the individual countries. One great improvement as regards the co-ordination problem has been achieved already: the London agreement provides that, if the Inter-allied Tribunal has once decided that a certain German group or organisation is of a criminal character, any signatory of the agreement may bring individuals to trial for membership before a national military or occupation court. In such a case the criminal nature of the group shall be considered proven once for all and cannot be questioned any longer. The United

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 159-160, 250-251.

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Nations Indictment names the following groups and organisations which should be declared criminal: Reich Cabinet, Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party, S.S., Gestapo, S.A., General Staff and High Command. Thus, in particular, all members of the Gestapo and its affiliated organisations can be brought to trial and punished according to their merits even if there is not sufficient proof of an actual participation in individual crimes. This may serve to bring it home to the German people that the whole Nazi system constituted a huge criminal conspiracy, that everyone who took an active part in one of those evil institutions which were created to uphold the régime by illegal and inhumane methods is himself a criminal in the eyes of the law and the whole civilised world, and that none of the guilty will escape punishment. This *modus operandi* is certainly worthier than the proposed "outlawing of all members and helpers of the Gestapo" would have been.<sup>1</sup> "Outlawry," incompatible with the fundamental principles of modern civilisation as it is, had to remain out of the question—if only for the sake of those who would have liked to volunteer as executioners. It would have been unbearable even if it had been confined to *certain* evildoers. Applied to a group of many thousands, it would have amounted to nothing less than the proclamation of another "law of long knives."

The aim must be to strike everywhere at the main culprits. The principle which the report of the Kilgore Committee of the U.S.A. Senate<sup>2</sup> particularly stressed with respect to the German economic leaders—that "the punishment of some thousand leading industrialists will be more effective than the punishment of a million of Nazi underlings"—must be applied to all categories of war criminals, among whom are many doctors, scientists, and lawyers. In order to make the penalties reformatory as regards the criminals themselves, educative with respect to the German people, and useful for the purpose of reparation, the confiscation of the property of all persons convicted for war crimes of a more serious nature should always constitute a collateral penalty.<sup>3</sup> In cases of atrocities committed by younger men—so far as the death penalty is not incurred—a sentence of forced labour should be superimposed—to be served, after a term of penal servitude, in convict companies outside Germany, and in special cases outside Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Retrospective legislation, admittedly, is a highly undesirable device, particularly in criminal law. But it was obviously unavoidable in this emergency. For—to quote Lord Atkin's words—"the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. the debate in the House of Lords of March 20th, 1945

<sup>2</sup>Cf. pp. 292, 297 note 3, 300 note 1

<sup>3</sup>Cf. clause 28 of the Charter of the International Tribunal

<sup>4</sup>Cf. p. 323



outrages of the war criminals transcend all domestic laws." while the lack of a *supernational* authority had so far prevented, unfortunately, the Law of Nations from developing from an "abstraction of law" to an effective instrument against the aggressors and ruthless despisers of international treaties, natural justice, and humanity. Thus, we ought not to be greatly impressed by the objection that, by introducing a new kind of *ad hoc* legislation, we should be doing the very thing with which we have always reproached the Germans. Incidentally, it would assuredly not have been to the advantage of the Nazi criminals if their own "elastic" laws had been applied to them, which would have allowed us to inflict the severest punishment upon those whose actions were proved, in the end, to have been "detrimental to the German State."<sup>1</sup> The crucial point is that the natural rules of impartial justice must govern the Allied courts composed of just and honest men to whom it falls to try the war criminals. The fairness of their sentences must prove the righteousness of the institution itself to the world, including those Germans who are still accessible to moral sentiment.

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However great the moral importance of the punishment of the German war criminals, we must not lose sight of the fact that it concerns only a single item within the immense task of re-establishing law and justice in Germany. The reader is aware how greatly the deliberate destruction of the law by the Nazis has contributed to the general moral decay in Germany; and a very wide field, indeed, has to be covered to repair the spiritual and material damage which has been done in the legal sphere. Already all statutes and governmental decrees by which, since 1933, the Nazis have insulted civilisation have been declared null and void.<sup>2</sup> But all judicial sentences and administrative decisions made on the ground of such legislation must be revised. An impressive beginning could be made by reopening the Reichstag fire proceedings. No hushing up can be tolerated—in the sphere of justice still less than anywhere else. The reconstruction itself of a decent law system will not be very difficult, since Germany possessed a modern system of codification until the Nazis wantonly destroyed it.<sup>3</sup> But it is obvious that the restoration of justice, and of a trustworthy body of magistrates and lawyers, demands alien assistance and control. The work of revision, and of repairing past injustices, in particular, cannot be left to magistrates who were prepared to go to school again when the Nazis came to power.<sup>4</sup> While,

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 113-118

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the joint Allied Proclamation after the Crimea Conference and clause 4 of the Berlin Agreement

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 110-111

<sup>4</sup>Cf pp 112-114, 119-121

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unfortunately, it may be impossible to have international courts instituted for the whole task, it would satisfy a minimum demand if foreign lawyers were to preside over those German courts before which the new trials in the reopened criminal and civil cases were to be held, and resort should be allowed to an international court of appeal if, for once, the vote of the foreign president of such a court should be overruled by the German members. If we fail to do our utmost in re-establishing law and justice in Germany, the task of re-education cannot be undertaken with any real hope of success

### III

Thus we have come to the very root of the German problem Re-education.

It is amazing and deplorable to note how imperfectly the necessity of changing the German mentality was understood for a long time in other countries, and how many superficial, and sometimes frivolous opinions as regards the German psychosis are still held even in the most intelligent circles, though recently the conviction that the re-education of Germany ought not to remain a mere slogan has made some progress. It is without doubt one of the most urgent post-war tasks, and this for very practical reasons, besides the more ideal ones. For it is fairly clear that the vague idea of a "perpetual isolation" of the Germans would be as unrealisable as it is undesirable,<sup>1</sup> and that one day the merely passive membership of Germany in the family of nations must lead to equality. It is obvious, on the other hand, that the indispensable basis of honest international collaboration—namely, mutual confidence—cannot be imagined, as far as Germany is concerned, until the state of mind which is expressed in the Nazi *Weltanschauung* can be regarded as utterly exorcised.<sup>2</sup> True, the practical proof that Germany was not, in fact, the strongest country must necessarily sap the deep-rooted German belief in their racial superiority and their mystical "mission" to rule the world. But the rebirth of such belief, after an interval of either hypocritical or superficial lip-service to a more reasonable philosophy, might be expected almost with certainty if no genuine remoulding of the German mentality were effected by means of a thorough and assiduous re-education.

He who does not believe in the mad doctrine of an innate and unchangeable—or, in other words, "racial"—inferiority of a people, who is aware that the German craze was, in fact, the logical result of historical developments, must admit that a decisive metamorphosis

<sup>1</sup>Cf the joint Allied Declaration and the utterances of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill after the Crimea Conference

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 272, 276, 300, 304

can be produced by an adequate treatment. Here—in the adequate treatment—lies the cardinal point. Scores of German thinkers of former times and of our own day, who in themselves provide conclusive evidence of a different mentality, were powerless to prevail over the rest of their fellow-countrymen. As regards political ethics, only a very small minority of the Germans was ever really impressed by them. Prussian expansionism and political reaction were in full career in the days of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller; and, at the time when Kant expounded his famous “categorical imperative,” Fichte and “Turnvater” Jahn were able to exercise an immense nationalist and Pan-Germanist influence. Particularly Jahn’s peculiar blend of exaggerated nationalism and semi-democratic gesture has, through the medium of many thousands of *Burgerturnvereine* (citizens’ athletic clubs), done much to spread and maintain, for a whole century, an unsound, expansionist and chauvinist “patriotism.” Courageous political novels of such power as Heinrich Mann’s repeatedly mentioned works,<sup>1</sup> “The Subject” and “The Poor,” which, at the time of the Weimar Republic, presented the Germans with a true description of the empty Prussian ideals of the Wilhelminian period, could avail nothing to prevent a swift relapse. Thus, while accentuating, on principle, the educability of every people, we have to abandon the delusion that the re-education of the Germans could safely be left to the Germans themselves.

Apart from the crowd of those who, without possessing any deeper knowledge of the matter, simply do not believe in the possibility of remoulding a great people, the exponents of the opinion that re-education must be left to the Germans belong to two different main groups. We have already dealt with the reactionary exponents of international wealth who explained, with regard to Nazism, that different “ideologies” must not prevent economic co-operation and still insist that the very principles of democracy would forbid us to impress our way of political thinking on those who do not accept it. These people cannot complain if this excites the suspicion that their whole attitude conceals an attempt to fight a hated democracy with its own weapons.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the truism that no principle must be carried to extremes, the qualification for deciding one’s own constitution and government obviously presumes a sound mind and a certain political maturity; and neither of these qualities can be attributed to the present German generation. We know that Hitlerism must be regarded as a genuine mass psychosis,<sup>3</sup> and when we endeavoured, in the first part of this book, to explain the causes of

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp. 20, 60

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp. 235-237, 267, 300-301

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 228-230

the precipitate developments in Germany between 1918 and 1933 in some detail, it was mainly to give the reader a clear picture of the morbid political lability of the average German, and to show how difficult it is to influence him through his intellect, while he can easily be seduced by confused and mystical oratory. However distasteful the fact itself and the inevitable conclusions may be for a liberal thinker, yet both earlier and more recent events, and numerous characteristic incidents in various spheres of life—such as have been reported occasionally in the previous chapters of this book—confirm the unpleasing impression that, in many respects, the German case is on all fours with that of the half-developed peoples, it is worse, indeed, in view of the higher level of information and outward *Kultur* of the "master people."<sup>1</sup> The author, some thirty years ago, would never have imagined that apparently reasonable and outwardly well-educated men whom he had known for years would one day reveal the typical unbalanced and, indeed, uncivilised German mentality depicted in this book. If this lability—further complicated by the methodical instruction of the Germans, during the past twelve years, in the art of political hypocrisy—if this state of mind is not fully appreciated by those who have now to tackle the German problem, and gradually overcome by way of re-education, Allied officials may be painfully disappointed when the Germans, amicable, docile, or even subservient, as they were during the first period of occupation, suddenly show a rather different mental attitude.

An imperfectly sane and immature individual cannot prescribe himself the treatment necessary to restore his health and to make him a worthy member of the human community. This consideration — together with the pronounced failure of so many of the best German thinkers and writers in remoulding their fellow-countrymen — also refutes the argument of the other group of the opponents of alien interference with German re-education. This group consists of certain humanitarian professional pedagogues who assert that a people can be educated only by itself. But a mentally sick people, like a sick man, must first of all be cured, and the members of a politically backward and half-civilised nation must first mature, before their further education and development can be entirely entrusted to themselves. And, after all, we are entitled to use education as well as any other means that we consider apt, in order to protect us against a new and sudden nationalist or social German explosion which would be disastrous to the peaceful development of a better world.

The result is obvious: the Germans must be put for a time

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 3, 40-41, 139-142, 230-232

under alien political guardianship, though for precisely the opposite purpose, and with very different methods of education, to those of the tutelage to which they are accustomed. Their former governments aimed at suppressing all free democratic development. Our aim is to make the Germans ripe, as quickly as possible, for unrestricted political self-control. But it is not enough that we ourselves should appreciate the deficiencies of the German mentality; nor even that the Germans should be informed what we think of their present state of mind—though it may have some moral and educative effect if they understand that the knowledge of their perverted way of thinking is no longer restricted to a few of their own prominent thinkers, but has become common property and a matter of general contempt abroad, and that this contempt cannot be mitigated by fine words, but only by a palpable proof of a complete change of mind. Again, it is not enough to persuade them of our firm resolution never to compound with any relics of their former "world-philosophy." They themselves must be made conscious of their folly. They must learn to understand that they were living in a condition of spiritual morbidity, of psychopathic fantasy, moreover, that it was not a fool's but a devil's paradise for which they were induced to fight and to die. Then, and only then, they may come to the conclusion that in future commonsense will suit them better than fresh adventures. German self-criticism alone can provide the necessary positive and final protection against relapses and fresh outbursts, which the merely negative means of isolation, disarmament, and supervision can secure only for a transitional period. So far—and so far only—we agree with the doctrine that "in the last resort" every people must educate itself. Our task will be first to create the solid mental and moral basis on which self-education eventually can proceed.

As mentioned before, the destruction wrought in their towns and villages, the depressing living conditions under the occupation, and the whole aftermath of the war cannot fail to produce a deep impression upon the Germans.<sup>1</sup> Certain measures taken by the military commanders on the spot—such as the compulsory visits to the concentration camps and the forced service of the inhabitants of the neighbouring places, without discrimination of class or sex, in the burying of the victims, and the general cleaning up—were useful and sensible expedients, in order to shake up the hardened minds of the philistines who had whispered to each other day by day about the terrible things going on in the camps, but had washed their hands of them and shut their eyes. But all such preliminary measures cannot yet be called re-education. They can only help to prepare

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 294-295

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the ground for it. The state of mental bewilderment which needs must follow in the wake of the defeat will make the mind of the Germans amenable to re-education, indeed, it forms a pre-condition for a success of our efforts to evoke self-criticism and genuine repentance. But these emotions must extend to the whole political past of Germany—not merely to the atrocities of the Nazis. We have to develop a perfectly new way of thinking akin to our own, and many obstacles must yet be overcome before we can hope that the great task may proceed smoothly and successfully.

Re-education requires, first of all, a reasonably peaceable atmosphere, and on the last pages of this book the reader will find a brief summary of the measures by which, we hope, this state can gradually be attained. Even this will be no easy matter, and, probably, take a considerable time. Even if anarchy and internal strife are prevented by the occupying powers, and civil life proceeds on comparatively normal lines, we shall still be faced with an enormous mistrust. If the Germans are to be induced honestly to adopt our fundamental principle of "live and let live," we must first persuade them that we ourselves mean business,<sup>1</sup> and that we are earnestly willing to admit a truly converted German people to a new and real—spiritual and material—community of nations. Above all—and this may constitute our greatest difficulty—we have to realise that twelve years of Nazi rule have almost completely suffocated the moral and spiritual life of Germany, and even the popular longing for such things.<sup>2</sup> As to a great part of the population, this terrible state of mind is still aggravated by their vegetating for long periods in cellars and shelters and among ruins, without interest in anything other than mere survival. This mental torpidity must first be cured. The light of the spirit must be kindled afresh, the very idea that there may be something more valuable in the world than force and naked materialism must be resuscitated. How are we to carry this into effect?

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The radical change of mind to which we aspire can be achieved only on a broad and solid ethical foundation. This notion lies at the bottom of the declarations of men like the late Dr. Temple, Vice-President Wallace, Lord Halifax, and many others, that the Christian faith must be made the basis of German re-education. As we know that the Nazi dogmas constitute the very antithesis of Christianity,<sup>3</sup> it would, indeed, be plain that those who *honestly* revert

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 287, 297-299

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 101-103

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp. 84-85, 87, 91

to the Christian creed must have learned to detest the barbarian *Weltanschauung*.

As matters stand, the ideal solution of a perfect re-Christianisation of Germany is an obvious impossibility. Few, indeed, will be under the delusion that more than a certain proportion of the present German generation can be converted into true Christians. We know<sup>1</sup> that the numerical strength of the valuable nucleus of faithful men and women who withstood all the threats and seductions of the Nazis is comparatively small. As to the others, dispassionate observation permits of some rough classification. The majority of the adherents to the German "world-philosophy" consisted of those who prided themselves on their "atheism," which, as we have seen, was generally based on a mistaken notion of the theory of evolution with a specifically Nazistic, allegedly "Nietzschean," tinge. They may be called the "don't care" group, as most of them contented themselves with envisaging the merely material aspect of the matter, without giving a thought to the question as to why there should be such a thing as evolution. Those exponents of the Nazi philosophy who felt a certain need of some metaphysical explanation used to embrace one of the new German "religions"—a modernised worship of Wotan, Rosenberg's "Myth of the Twentieth Century," Ludendorff's "Natural Religion," or that blasphemous perversion which concealed itself under the name of "German Christianity." It may be hoped that a substantial proportion of the latter categories, and some, perhaps, of the "don't care" division, will, after the experience of this war, be ripe for reconversion to Christianity, if the task is carried out in the right spirit and manner and by the right men. It is a matter of course that no reasonable step in this direction ought to be neglected. But it should be kept in mind that reconversion is of real value only in so far as it is deep and genuine. The outward Christianity of the former Germany afforded no better protection than a shield of cardboard in 1914, as on earlier occasions, and still more when the storm of the Nazi madness swept over Germany. Consequently any exaggerated efforts at proselytism should be abandoned. It will be far better not to dilute the sincere homogeneity of the future Christian communities by including in them those who would be but half-hearted members of the flock. This is not the place to suggest ways and means for the promotion of a social and practical Christianity. But at least a special warning should be uttered as to the danger of too readily re-admitting those dubious priests—and this applies not only to the heretics who preached the "German Christianity," but to many others who yielded to Nazi

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 88-89

pressure—who may come forward and declare their repentance. A very careful sifting—and a new ordination in every individual case—appears to be inevitable. A half-hearted and superficial clergy would do grievous damage in conditions where only true devotion and psychological ability can prevail.

It is obvious that there will be many Germans whom it will be impracticable to win over to a real Christianity. Not all of these are incorrigible Nazis, or persons who cannot by any means be induced to think of anything beyond their every-day world. It would be shortsighted to overlook, or confound with the amoral chaff, those circles of conscious agnostics whose irreligion cannot be reduced to thoughtless paganism or foggy mysticism. There are also in Germany "free-thinkers" who, though they feel unable to adhere to one of the existing religions, recognise a higher power—in the shape of an unknown God, or even a self-creating universe—and who consider the human incapacity to penetrate behind the initial hypothesis to be proof that we are not required, or even entitled, to do more than humbly admit our inability to imagine the inscrutable. The position of these agnostics has been too little regarded, so far, in the discussion of Germany's ethical re-education. They are not suspect of Hitlerism, which would have involved the virtual deification of the leader; and it should be remembered that among the first things that the Nazis did after their seizure of power—even before they liquidated all religious education—was to abolish the teaching of agnostic ethics in those German schools where it had been admitted under the Weimar Republic. Whatever one may think of the agnostic theory, so much is certain, that almost all our practical ideals can be approached from a merely ethical starting-point, such as is defined by Kant's categorical imperative, and it is interesting to observe that the four principal peace aims enumerated in the late Mr. Wendell Willkie's well-known statement are all identical with social ideals which famous exponents of the legal philosophy of many nations, and of quite different religious convictions, had derived, long before, from merely ethical dogmas. The Frenchman Duguit developed the principle of "social solidarity" as the essence of his legal theory; the Pole Petraczycki proposed "peace and charity based on honest work which is sure of its reward", the American Pound explained that "absolute justice" was the ultimate aim; and the German (!) Stammeler demanded "co-operation in good neighbourliness." If proper use were made of the moral powers inherent in this vital category of thoughtful men and women, they well might constitute an effective focus of attraction to those Germans who, though estranged from the Christian ideology, are still



accessible to ethical influences. Indeed, we cannot afford to omit even the smallest bodies of really decent Germans. Moreover, the modest numbers of the former Association of German Freethinkers may be misleading, inasmuch as — for social reasons, out of “tradition,” or sometimes because of a certain bashfulness—many people were reluctant to confess their agnostic convictions even after the Weimar Republic had removed the earlier, semi-official inhibitions. There are good reasons to assume that the numbers of German Freethinkers have increased and are still increasing. A wide field is open for co-operation with this group in the common purpose of re-educating the Germans to a peaceful and decent mentality, and the Christian Churches in Germany would not be the losers if a policy of sterile hostility were replaced by mutual and tactful tolerance.

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Re-education must extend to all spheres of life, to every group of society, to all ages. In all our political and other actions with regard to Germany the educative motive must be kept in mind—similarly as we endeavoured to show this in our previous observations as to the measures of security, the future economic and social treatment of the Germans, and the legal sphere. If one considers the surprisingly wide interest in intellectual life which prevails among the workers and peasants in Soviet Russia, and the amazing cultural evolution which has occurred in the U.S.A. within the last thirty years, the belief forces itself upon one’s mind that similar methods, if dexterously applied in Germany, must lead to a similar effect. For the immense progress in the popular cultural life of Russia and North America has not been merely a by-product of rapid social and economic evolution. It has been carefully planned by the governments, and gradually brought about through spirited methods of enlightenment employing, above all, the medium of the universities. There are now 1,000,000 university students in the U.S.A.;<sup>1</sup> and many readers will be astonished to learn that Russia, too, had over 600,000 university students in 1941. The influence of the universities in both these countries, however, extends far beyond the education of their internal students. In the U.S.A. three millions of persons make use of the university extension lectures given by members of the teaching staffs, and of correspondence courses and regular educative cinema programmes, all this for an average fee of five shillings per person. Numerous lectures are given day by day over the wireless by the U.S.A. universities. The University of Minnesota maintains its own radio station. The State universities throughout

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 321

the U.S.A. have made themselves responsible for the cultural development of the whole non-academic community of their respective districts. Many members of their staffs, now numbering 100,000 men and women, pay regular visits even to remote villages in order to promote popular education. Similarly, the Soviet universities have organised an extensive programme of adult education. Their professors give lectures in factory and school clubs, and during the long vacations they make tours of the collective farms and industrial settlements. The civilising importance of such efforts can hardly be exaggerated when literally millions of people are thus brought into contact with genuine culture, and acquire some elementary knowledge of philosophy and art. The direct and indirect influence of such education extends to all and every walk of life, broadening the minds of the masses and developing and strengthening their capacity for thinking for themselves.

The inferences as to the German problem are fairly clear. Many Germans once prided themselves on being a people of poets and thinkers. While this was not true, at all events the level of genuine civilisation was much higher more than a century ago than it is now. Why should the Germans be unable to rediscover their souls if they are set upon the right path by means more methodical and skilful than the few well-intentioned but ungainly attempts of the Weimar Republic?<sup>1</sup> We need not waste many words on refuting banal objections—such as that, first of all, we have to assure similar achievements for ourselves, or that the present German generation has not deserved, and would hardly appreciate such tender care, or that all this would go beyond our plans and possibilities. The gigantic task of remoulding the Germans can only succeed if it is carried out on a very broad basis and with the firm conviction that it is not a matter of secondary importance for us, but that really *nostra res agitur*.

To re-educate a people demands much more, indeed, than mere moralising. It demands above all that we must look—and make our “pupils” look—beyond the every-day necessities. On the other hand, the very fact that the means of education served, with equal success, in Russia to promote the Communist ideology, and in the U.S.A. to develop and strengthen the democratic convictions, proves the immense importance of using this weapon in the right way for the moulding of public opinion. The true enlightenment of the broadest strata in Germany can and must serve to paralyse the perverted German *Weltanschauung*, to deflect the minds of the people from an empty materialism and nationalism, and to destroy the herd instinct which made them subservient to their ruling classes and other

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 64

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masters Education must help us to develop a higher morality and a really peaceful mentality in Germany. Moreover, the democracies, in order to maintain and strengthen their own position in Central Europe, have a special reason to make the fullest use of the noble instrument of popular instruction in their zones of occupation. For only a well-informed and morally educated German people will be able to beware, in the long run, of political extremism and to appreciate the fact that genuine democracy represents, indeed, the highest form of human civilisation

Perhaps we may quote from the preamble to the Constitution of a United Nations' Organisation for Education and Cultural Reconstruction, drafted by the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education in London in April, 1944 "To deprive any part of the interdependent modern world of the cultural resources, human and material, through which its children are trained and its people informed, is to destroy to that extent the common knowledge and the mutual understanding upon which the peace of the world and its security must rest" Of course, we must not forget, for the sake of the lofty plans indicated, those educative measures of a sterner nature which are no less necessary, though, in the scope of this book, we can hardly do more than to stress a few further aspects, and to sketch, in the barest outlines, the methods and machinery to be applied in some of the many fields which must be covered. To provide a detailed scheme might fill another volume

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Notwithstanding the fact that re-education of a people means much more than teaching in the narrow sense of the word, the instruction and moulding of the youth remains the most outstanding and, at the same time, the most promising part of the difficult task of building up a new popular mentality in Germany. The Nazis acted only too thoroughly on their belief that with the strict control of education of the youth they had the political future of Germany in their hands. Even the spelling and arithmetic books were tainted with their propaganda. Thus a completely new system of education on a modern social basis must be created for the coming German generation. Indeed, apart from the war-worn school buildings, and some technical apparatus, very little is left which could be of service in the new intellectual and moral training, and whatever educational system may be chosen, no regard must be paid to the opinions of the present German pedagogues. For the mentality of the professors who remained in office under the Nazi régime, and of the school-teacher-reserve-officers, who were themselves educated in the spirit of the herd-instinct and militarism, and who impressed upon their

#### THE GERMAN MENTALITY

pupils the "world-philosophy" of Nazism, is precisely the thing that we wish to see extinguished<sup>1</sup> We have earlier pointed to the fact that there were certain able German scholars who could be entrusted with the job of establishing new educational curricula—those men who were dismissed and expelled by the Nazis as representatives of the "mentality of Weimar"; and it has been reported meanwhile that some sets of text-books have been completed with their assistance. But ensuring that the re-written school books are expounded in the proper spirit—more, that henceforth the spirit of democratic freedom really governs every sphere of learning in Germany—is a much more delicate and formidable task. In order really to achieve this, an Inter-Allied High Commissioner for Education should be appointed, with far-reaching powers over all institutions of learning, from universities to primary schools—if not for the whole of Germany, then, at least, for the districts occupied by the Western democracies. Further, it would be highly desirable to nominate, for a time at least, foreign curators and headmasters to the universities and greater schools, and also to appoint many foreign lecturers and teachers. The number of qualified German teachers now living in exile who would be willing to return is insignificant, and, while some of them might become useful helpers in the re-education of Germany, the victims of oppression do not always constitute the most desirable tutors for the children of their torturers. This applies all the more to the German case, inasmuch as great sections of the population—both sexes alike—will yet, for some time to come, cling, openly or in secret, to their racial hatred and every kind of fanaticism. For the same reason, incidentally, it would not be advisable to rely too much on the good influence of family life, when the children, perverted by the Hitler Youth as they are, will be given back to their likewise perverted parents. Similar considerations make it plain that it would be difficult to discover inside Germany a sufficient number of qualified instructors who themselves possess a definite democratic world philosophy and are able to express it in simple and trenchant phrases, in such a way as to impress their pupils. Moreover, those who can be found may be exposed—just as may the returning refugees—to the hatred and suspicion of a great proportion of their fellow-countrymen<sup>2</sup> It shows how little the German mentality is understood abroad that most of the suggestions as to the re-education of the Germans overlook this essential point. And, further, those foreign pedagogues are mistaken who, without possessing any specific knowledge of German peculiarities, assume, as a matter of course, that alien teachers would necessarily encounter similar hostility. In

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp 15, 23, 100, 103-105

<sup>2</sup>Cf p 279

the past, indeed, it evoked the fury of the Pan-Germanists that the ordinary man used to show a certain respectful bias towards foreign peoples and foreign visitors to Germany (*Auslanderei*)<sup>1</sup> As submissiveness is one of the German characteristics — and one only temporarily superseded by the Nazi-bred racial arrogance—foreign teachers might well be received with respect, and, in time, with genuine goodwill.

It has been said that it would be impossible to find a sufficient number of teachers of any nationality who might be able and prepared to work in Germany. It was partly in order to meet this objection that we mentioned that the U.S.A., with a population three times as large as that of Great Britain, had twenty times as many university students (1,000,000) before the war. The universities of the U.S.A. turned out 100,000 graduates every year (against 5,000 in this country) who continued their studies as post-graduates. This immense arsenal alone could supply the necessary number of well-qualified men, among them many thousands of German parentage; and the American graduate has shown, during the period of depression, that he is willing, without prejudice, to take on any useful and honest job. The crucial point is that the importance of our task must be generally and fully understood, and that the popular desire of the troops of occupation, particularly the Americans, to get home as quickly as possible and to leave the Germans to themselves, is not allowed to interfere with the solution of a problem on which the peace and welfare of mankind depends.

#### IV

We have made it clear enough that it would be futile to close our eyes to the innumerable technical difficulties — for they are technical and not insoluble, in spite of all their gravity — which present themselves in the wide field of German re-education. We know that we shall not be dealing with well-intentioned pupils, willing to learn and to attain to full moral maturity as quickly as possible. The present generation of Germans, with their typical *Kultur* and semi-civilisation, taught either to ridicule or to regard as mere hypocrisy what we believe to be the most sacred values of ethics, will almost certainly resist, both consciously and instinctively, our efforts to change the spirit in which all their public and private institutions have been conducted. We know that the handicap is made still heavier by the fact that it is the younger generation of the Germans which is most severely affected by Hitlerism—that the cruelties committed in the German concentration camps were

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 22.

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perpetrated by juvenile S.S. men, and that it is the youth of Germany which must be charged with the worst outrages in the enslaved countries<sup>1</sup> We remember the arrogant and obdurate attitude of numerous German prisoners of war,<sup>2</sup> which demonstrates the difficulty of expelling the philosophy of force even from the brains of such as must not *eo ipso* be classed as criminals; and we do not share the dangerous and superficial optimism of a few psychologists who assured us that the countenance of some selected groups of German prisoners whom they had watched during a lecture given by a German anti-Nazi speaker<sup>3</sup> had convinced them that a course of instruction would suffice to expel the whole Nazi mentality<sup>4</sup> We know only too well that much deeper ploughing is necessary. We also do not overlook the fact that many parents will not only themselves persist in their warped mentality, but may try to hinder, by all means, the education of the coming generation in a conception of the world different from their own, and teach their children to sing "One day we shall wage war again" We shall nevertheless succeed if we never, in any circumstances, acquiesce in the decrepit wisdom of the various "can't be done" groups, and, last but not least, if we are firmly resolved to apply the appropriate means, to eschew useless half-measures, and to resist the temptation of making any compromise with the German exponents of the powers of reaction.

<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 140-142

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 246, 248

<sup>3</sup>Already the first version of this book had suggested that a determined attempt should be made to gain a spiritual influence over the captured Germans by means of a competent instruction in their own language It was a mistake—probably due to the fact that it was not sufficiently appreciated that this was not an ordinary war between nations (cf pp 259-260)—that for far too long the military authorities confined themselves to observing the international regulations, and otherwise leaving the prisoners more or less to themselves, and the improvable elements to the influence, and treatment, of the incorrigible Some slight progress was made when a number of "collaborators" was occupied in agriculture, and more when the B.B.C. started its valuable broadcasting service, in German, of anti-Nazi war prisoners (cf p 233, note 3) But still in 1945 the p.o.w. were barred from access to such anti-Nazi publications in German as, e.g., "Deutsche Hörer" (a booklet containing Thomas Mann's broadcasts over an American wireless) and from any personal contact with well-known anti-Nazi refugees living in this country The separation of Nazis and anti-Nazis was only partly carried into effect, even after the end of hostilities only weak efforts, such as indicated above, have been made for the remoulding of the war prisoners An invaluable opportunity would be invariably lost if everything possible were not done, now at least, to re-educate them—by instructing them as to the true historical facts and main political issues, the world opinion on Hitlerism, the causes of the war, the activities of the Gestapo, the nature of the new world which is in the making, and the general concepts of democracy Of course, the thing must be done skilfully, as—not without success—it has been attempted in Russia (cf p 252) It is obvious that the return to Germany of a mass of not re-educated war prisoners would aggravate heavily the task of remoulding Germany On the other hand, a number of converted Germans and well-trained anti-Nazis would be a very useful asset, particularly in respect of the enormous difficulty of replacing all the Nazis who must be removed from their positions in Germany (cf. pp 276-277, 325)

First of all, as we have indicated before, it will be inevitable to remove the most brutalised and dangerous elements from Germany, in order to prevent persistent underground agitation, persecution, and a state of unrest bound to disturb any successful reformatory work. This applies not merely to war criminals in the narrower sense, but to many thousands, and, perhaps, hundreds of thousands, of the Hitler guards,<sup>1</sup> who for a considerable number of years should be employed, under a severe discipline, in or outside of Europe, on useful work—such as the building of railways, roads, and canals, or bringing waste land into cultivation, while it goes without saying that we must not lose sight of the moral duty to do all that is in our power eventually to regain for civilisation even these lost souls.

The agreements of Berlin and London provide a solid basis for all the necessary measures.<sup>2</sup> We have already quoted the clause which orders the “complete and final” suppression of all institutions and organisations which serve the purpose of keeping alive the spirit of militarism and Nazism, such as the famous “Warrior Clubs” (*Kriegervereine*)<sup>3</sup> and officers’ associations under whatever benevolent cloak they are hiding. This implies that the wearing of uniforms, except those of the police force and the post and traffic employees, would be illegal and punishable.

In order to prevent any disturbance of the work of re-education by Fascist, Pan-Germanist, or racial baiting, an inter-allied censorship of all kinds of publications — press, wireless, theatre, shows, and cinema performances — will be inevitable for a considerable time, though it should be confined to the necessary minimum.<sup>4</sup> No book-burning in the Nazi manner should be considered; but all the dangerous and worthless printed matter, by which the “world-philosophy” and the Nazi doctrines—particularly the “racial theory”—were impressed upon the people, must be withdrawn from the libraries and bookshops, and the distribution and borrowing of this kind of literature must be made illegal, except for authentic research work. On the other hand, the works which the Nazis have destroyed or withheld from the Germans, for political or racial reasons, must be restored as quickly as possible, and every opportunity used to convey the range of ideas of free peoples to the German masses. Measures must be taken to ensure that no German government will be able in the future to prevent the publications or creations of free men throughout the world from reaching German readers, listeners and

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<sup>1</sup>Cf p 308

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 292, 308

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 14, 16

<sup>4</sup>Cf Clause 3 of the Tripartite Agreement of Berlin.

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spectators<sup>1</sup> The German wireless, a mere party affair under the Nazi régime, would, probably, be best administered according to the B.B.C. system.

It will be necessary to expropriate all the German newspapers and periodicals, which, without exception, were Nazi-owned and completely Nazified. In order to secure a really independent press, which would be able to represent the opinions of all non-Pan-Germanist groups, the mere removal of the Nazi editors is no sufficient guarantee. The ownership itself and the mechanical equipment should be transferred to cultural and religious associations, political bodies, trade unions, and associations of journalists, without any other discriminations than those demanded by the purpose of excluding any totalitarian propaganda.<sup>2</sup> An independent syndicate of journalists, similar to the pre-Nazi organisations of the other liberal professions, should be created, and endowed with disciplinary power over its members.

It is obvious that the work of remoulding Germany cannot even begin in earnest until all those magistrates, officials, clergymen, professors, and lawyers have been removed who have irreparably besmirched themselves during the Nazi period and a sufficient number of reliable judges, barrister-solicitors, and a staff of competent officials, teachers, journalists, etc., has been established. But these are only examples. It is plain that our task cannot be carried out in any walk of life whatever without a previous and intensive purge. The whole nervous system of Germany has first to be made clean and sound if the great work of resuscitating the democratic spirit of the masses is to be undertaken with a well-founded hope of success; and there were good reasons<sup>3</sup> for the decision of the Berlin Conference, that outspoken Nazis are to be removed not only from public and semi-public office, but also from "positions of responsibility in important private undertakings."<sup>4</sup>

The problem of cleaning out the Nazi fanatics, with their appendage of political freebooters and turncoats, is indeed terrific considering the permeation of every branch of public and economic life, which we have exposed in some detail.<sup>5</sup> The difficulty of finding the right human material to replace all the Nazis, and to create, above all, a trustworthy and efficient democratic German administration may well prove even more critical than that of providing suitable teachers, the more so as the officials must be drawn almost entirely from German sources. On the other hand, the suppression of the vast

<sup>1</sup>Cf p. 319

<sup>2</sup>Similar suggestions as regards the French newspapers have been made by the National Federation of the Clandestine Press

<sup>3</sup>Cf pp 292, 300-302

<sup>4</sup>Cf Clause 6.

<sup>5</sup>Cf pp 161-170, 276-277



Party machinery, the abolition of all the administrative parallel organisations which the Nazis had instituted, and the re-establishment of a reasonable, municipal self-government, instead of the existing, heavily over-organised State administration, should make it possible to carry on with a mere fraction of the former number of civil servants. At any rate, the direct and indirect influence of officialdom upon a people which has been accustomed for generations to regard every State official not as a servant of the community but as a superior<sup>1</sup> is so great—and this applies not merely to the higher ranks, but also to the subalterns who are in daily contact with the public—that any soft-pedalling would be, indeed, disastrous. The inherent disadvantages of energetic action—liable to hamper, temporarily, the work of the routine administration, and to provoke a rift in the German people—are far less dangerous than any weakness in this respect would inevitably prove in the course of time. We must never forget that it was the half-heartedness with which the men of Weimar carried out their “purge” that constituted the intrinsic reason for the breakdown of the Republic.<sup>2</sup> Of course, not every postman or petty official who has sworn the prescribed oath of allegiance to Hitler and the Nazi State must be removed. But nobody can remain in office, whether he was appointed before or after the “seizure of power,” who, as the Berlin agreement says, “has been more than a nominal participant in the activities of the Nazi Party.” While any falling into the trap of irresponsible accusations by personal enemies and place-seekers must be avoided, the danger of being deceived by lip-service is certainly no less immediate. Many of the officials who have served under Hitler may imagine that it should once again be enough simply to declare their “preparedness to co-operate on the basis of the new political situation,” while others will assert that they had “never been Nazis at heart,” or that “their eyes are now open.” Most of them will be evil hypocrites. The reader knows how careful the Nazis were to leave nobody in office who was not a tested Hitlerite. Even with such officials as were not just fanatical Nazis, and who, perhaps, may themselves believe, more or less honestly, in their quick reconversion into democrats, intensive instruction must do its work before you can be sure that they would be really proof against a new, refined seduction. Furthermore, the point must be stressed that none of the dismissed Nazi officials must draw any pension, and it is highly important for the sake of German re-education that the same principle should be applied to

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 16, 62-63

<sup>2</sup>Cf pp 27-28

<sup>3</sup>Cf p 27

## THE GERMAN MENTALITY

the officers and N.C.O.s of the dissolved forces. Only those who have been disabled, or are unfit to earn a living, ought to receive a modest allowance

It goes without saying that both the purge and the new composition of German officialdom demand the most careful inter-Allied supervision. It must be followed by a prolonged, all-permeating, and effective control of the activities of the German authorities, semi-public, and important private institutions. It will not suffice merely to establish schemes and to receive reports. Active control at every key-point, and of every single institution—not for the sake of control itself, and not with unnecessarily provocative pettifoggery, but with inflexible firmness in all essential matters—is an inescapable necessity. However distasteful it may appear to many of us to maintain for a considerable time a system which, as to its outward aspect, may bear some resemblance to Hitler's fatal *Gauleiter* apparatus—the Germans themselves, with their intimate experience of Nazi administration, will therefore resent a close, but honest, supervision, which may be gradually relaxed as re-education begins to show results, less than we may now suspect

The more the strictness of the military administration of the occupying powers is loosened in due course, the more will close and honest co-operation between the Allied authorities and the future German organisations—governmental and other—be necessary. Thereby alone will it be possible to discover and eliminate secret nuclei of obstruction, illwill, and sabotage. This collaboration must be supported on the German side by a sincere conviction that it would be treachery against the best interests of the German people to lend an ear, or to give harbourage, to political adventurers—and not an act of "patriotism," as it had eventually become the fashion to believe under the Weimar Republic<sup>1</sup>. The same principles must play a leading part as regards the choice of any future Government by the Germans themselves and our approval of the personalities who may form it. As to this, something might be learned from the Russian attitude with respect to the reliability and "friendliness" of Governments in their neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, however, foreign inspectors and instructors ought to preserve that aloofness which, together with justice and integrity, has always been a characteristic of British administration abroad. Whatever one may think of the suitability of such an attitude under other conditions, the very nature of the present German mentality makes it a necessity. For in the given circumstances, and for the time being, it would be a risky

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<sup>1</sup>Cf pp 32-34

matter, indeed, to trust more than a comparatively small number of German politicians, officials, and business men.

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A field full of weeds cannot be cleaned by a solitary ploughing. Weeds will shoot up again and again, and will have to be removed patiently, time after time, until, after many years, the waste land has become a fertile tilth, profitable to its owner and no longer a menace to neighbouring acres. Intense and persistent labour may be able to remove from many brains and hearts, even of the present generation of Germans, the evil traditions and the pathological nonsense of the Nazi "world-philosophy." But we must not too readily forget this time how quickly the fine resolve of 1918, that war should end war, was set aside, and how soon the seduction of intolerance and brutality proved to have a stronger appeal in German ears than the summons to sober contemplation. We must never rest until our ultimate and real aim is achieved, until the whole existing German mentality, of which the lust of aggression is only a single feature, has been replaced by a genuine goodwill, until the Germans, ashamed of the period of Nazism, will say to themselves, in their inmost heart, "*maxima nostra culpa*," and blame themselves in that they had not the moral power to resist the atavistic instincts which made them Hitler's slaves. Our hope must rest on a rising generation, who cannot justly be held responsible for the acts of their fathers, but must be admitted to the fellowship of nations on equal terms—provided that their own conduct gives us cause to trust them as good neighbours. There must be a period of probation, long enough to convince us that an independent legal system is firmly established in Germany, that religion, culture, science, and the arts are allowed to develop in decent freedom, that education continues to be liberal and peaceful, and that in the political and spiritual, no less than in the economic field—to say nothing of the military one—every thought of evasion or sabotage of international obligations is abandoned. When the world is at length convinced that free democratic opinions have definitely taken the place of false and regressive doctrines, and that honest administrations are giving loyal international co-operation, the time will arrive for the Germans to "take their place among the free and peaceful peoples of the world,"<sup>1</sup> and the cure begun by this crusade will be finally accomplished.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. the Introduction to the Tripartite Agreement of Berlin

## SOME PERSONALIA

- AHLWARDT, HERRMANN, 1846-1914, teacher, the "Father of anti-Semitism."
- AUERBACH, BERTHOLD, 1812-1882, democratic writer.
- BADEN, PRINCE MAX OF, 1867-1929, German *Reichs* Chancellor at the end of the Great War
- "BARBAROSSA," FRIEDRICH, Holy Roman Emperor, 1123-1190, of whom the legend says that he sits in a cavern in the Kyffhauser mountain waiting until the need of his country will call him
- BARTELS, ADOLF, born 1862, anti-Semitic literary historian
- BERNHARDI, FRIEDRICH VON, 1849-1930, general, promoter of the doctrine of total warfare.
- BETHMANN-HOLLWEG, THEOBALD VON, 1856-1921, *Reichs* Chancellor before and during the first part of the Great War
- BISMARCK, OTTO VON, the "Iron Chancellor," 1815-1898
- BRACHT, FRANZ, 1877-1933, ultramontane Deputy Commissioner for Prussia, *Reichs* Minister of Interior until Hitler seized power
- BRUNING, HEINRICH, born 1885, ultramontane *Reichs* Chancellor until June, 1932
- BUCH, WALTER, born 1883, former *Reichswehr* major, founder of the Gestapo, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Nazi Party
- BULOW, BERNHARD VON, 1849-1929, *Reichs* Chancellor under Wilhelm II.
- CHAMBERLAIN, HOUSTON STEWART, 1856-1926, German philosopher and exponent of Pan-Germanism
- CROCE, BENEDETTO, born 1866, Italian anti-Fascist historian and philosopher.
- DAITZ, WERNER, born 1884, leading Nazi economist
- DARRÉ, WALTHER, born 1895, Nazi Minister of Agriculture until 1942.
- DOLLFUSS, ENGELBERT, 1892-1934, Austrian Chancellor, assassinated by Nazi agents.
- DONITZ, KARL, born 1891, *Grossadmiral*, Hitler's "successor"
- ECKHART, JOHANNES, "Meister," 1260-1327, Dominican Prior and philosopher
- EHRlich, PAUL, 1854-1915, professor of medicine, discoverer of the anti-syphilis drug "Salvarsan."
- EINSTEIN, ALBERT, born 1879, professor of mathematics, prominent for his theory of relativity
- EISNER, KURT, 1879-1919, social-democratic politician and Premier Minister of Bavaria, assassinated by the nationalist fanatic Count Arco
- ERZBERGER, MATTHIAS, 1875-1921, democratic-ultramontane politician and Minister of the Weimar Republic, assassinated by nationalist fanatics
- FICHTE, JOHANN GOTTLIEB, 1762-1814, professor and political philosopher in Berlin.

FONTANE, THEODOR, 1819-1898, novel writer and poet  
 FORSTER, ALBERT, born 1902, the "liberator" of Danzig.  
 FRANK, HANS, born 1900, former barrister-solicitor at Munich, Nazi Minister of Justice and President of the Nazi Academy of German Law  
 FRANTZ, art historian (middle of the 19th century), the first promoter of the doctrine of a specific German *Kultur*.  
 FREISLER, ROLAND, 1893-1944, former solicitor-barrister at Kassel, Nazi politician, Chairman of the "People's Court."  
 FREUD, SIEGMUND, 1856-1942, professor of medicine, founder of the science of Psycho-Analysis  
 FREYTAG, GUSTAV, 1816-1895, writer of historical novels  
 FRIEDRICH WILHELM OF BRANDENBURG, the "Great Elector," 1648-1688.  
 FRIEDRICH WILHELM I OF PRUSSIA, the "Soldier King, 1688-1740.  
 FRIEDRICH II OF PRUSSIA, the "Great King," 1740-1786.  
 FRITSCH, WERNER VON, 1880-1939, general and former C-in-C of the *Reichswehr*, "killed in battle" (probably assassinated by Nazi agents) during the campaign in Poland.  
 FUNK, WALTHER, born 1890, Nazi Minister of Economics and President of the *Reichsbank* after 1938  
 GALEN, CLEMENS COUNT VON, born 1878, catholic bishop of Munster before and during the World War.  
 GIERCKE, OTTO VON, 1841-1921, professor of jurisprudence in Berlin  
 GOEBBELS, DR. JOSEF, 1897-1945, Nazi Minister of Propaganda  
 GORDELER, KARL, born 1884, former burgomaster of Leipzig, was appointed by Hitler as High Commissioner for Price Control, resigned, 1934, took a leading part in the anti-Nazi conspiracy of 1944, and was hanged  
 GOERING, HERMANN, born 1893, *Reichsmarschall* and President of the *Reichstag*.  
 HAUSHOFER, KARL, born 1869, general, exponent of Pan-Germanism and Nazism, promoter of the science of Geo-Politics  
 HAVENSTEIN, RUDOLF, 1857-1923, President of the *Reichsbank* before and at the time of the great inflation.  
 HEBBEL, CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH, 1813-1863, poet and dramatist  
 HELLDORF, WOLF HEINRICH COUNT, born 1896, Nazi Chief Constable of Berlin, took part in the conspiracy of 1944 and was hanged  
 HERDER, JOHANN GOTTFRIED, 1744-1803, poet and philosopher, friend of Goethe  
 HESS, RUDOLF, born 1894, till 1941 Hitler's deputy and designed successor.  
 HIMMLER, HEINRICH, 1900-1945, former teacher, Gestapo Chief and *Reichsfuhrer S.S.*, Hitler's deputy since 1941  
 HINDENBURG, PAUL VON, 1847-1934, field marshal and *Reichspräsident*.  
 HITLER, ADOLF, *the Fuhrer*, 1889-1945

HOFER, ANDREAS, the "*Sandwirt*," 1767-1810, hero of the Tyrolese wars of liberation, sentenced to death by a French military court and shot at Mantua.

HUGENBERG, ALFRED, born 1865, conservative and Pan-Germanist industrialist and politician before, during, and after the Great War, temporarily associated with the Nazis.

JAHN, FRIEDRICH LUDWIG, the "*Turnvater*," 1778-1852, founder of the German "Turnverein" movement

KALTENBRUNNER, DR ERNST, born 1902, former Austrian lawyer and Nazi terrorist, Chief of "the Gestapo within the Gestapo"

KERRL, HANS, 1887-1941, a former petty-official of the court, became the first Nazi Minister of Justice in Prussia, later Minister of Church affairs

KOSSINNA, GUSTAV, 1858-1931, professor of archaeology in Berlin

LAGARDE, PAUL ANTON, 1827-1891, professor of history at Gottingen

LESSING, GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM, 1729-1781, famous poet and dramatist

LESSING, THEODOR, philosopher, assassinated by Nazi agents in Prague, 1933.

LOYOLA, ST IGNATIUS, 1491-1556, founder of the Order of Jesuits

LUBBE, defendant in the *Reichstag* fire proceedings, sentenced to death and hanged, 1933

LUDENDORFF, ERICH VON, 1865-1937, general, Chief of Staff in the Great War, later Nazi politician, founder of a new "natural religion"

LUXEMBURG, ROSA, 1870-1919, Communist politician, murdered by nationalistic officers

MACHIAVELLI, NICCOLO, 1469-1527, Italian diplomatist, historian and political writer

MACKENSEN, AUGUST VON, born 1849, field marshal in the Great War, later adherent of Hitler

MANN, HEINRICH, born 1871, writer of modern social and political novels, brother of Th Mann

MANN, THOMAS, born 1875, famous novel writer

MENDELSSOHN, MOSES, 1729-1786, philosopher, the "Socrates of the Jews"

METTERNICH, CLEMENS WENZEL PRINCE OF, 1773-1859, Austrian statesman, exponent of reaction, founder of the "Holy Alliance"

MOLLER, THEODOR, born 1840, Prussian Minister of Commerce under the last *Kaiser*

MULLER, LUDWIG, born 1863, the Nazi *Reichsbischof*, founder of the "German Christendom," ended by suicide in 1945

NIEMOLLER, MARTIN, born 1892, pastor, founder of the "Evangelical Confessional Church," 1937-1945, imprisoned in a concentration camp

NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH WILHELM, 1844-1900, philosopher

PAPEN, FRANZ VON, last *Reichs* Chancellor before Hitler, Vice-Chancellor from the "seizure of power" until 1934, later Nazi Ambassador in Ankara till 1944

PETERS, KARL, 1856-1918, one of the founders of the former German colony of East Africa.

RAEDER, ERICH VON, born 1876, Hitler's Chief Admiral until 1943.

RATHENAU, WALTHER, 1876-1922, Foreign Minister in the Weimar Republic, assassinated by nationalist fanatics

REUTER, FRITZ, 1810-1874, democratic novel writer and poet (wrote in dialect).

RIBBENTROP, JOACHIM VON, born 1893, former Nazi Ambassador in London, Hitler's Foreign Minister since 1938

ROCCO, ALFREDO, born 1875, Fascist political philosopher and writer

ROHM, ERNST, born 1881, Hitler's first S A. Chief, assassinated in the great "purge" of June 30th, 1934.

ROSENBERG, ALFRED, born 1893, Nazi chief philosopher and racial theorist, author of the "Myth of the 20th Century"

SCHACHT, DR. HJALMAR, born 1877, President of the *Reichsbank* and Minister of Economics, before and under Hitler, until 1938

SCHEMANN, C. LUDWIG, born 1852, Pan-German political writer.

SCHIRACH, BALDUR VON, born 1907, Nazi politician and leader of the Nazi Youth Movement.

SCHLEICHER, KURT VON, C-in-C of the *Reichswehr* before and under Hitler, assassinated during the "purge" of June 30th, 1934

SCHRODER, KURT BARON VON, born 1889, banker at Cologne, leader of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Banken*, one of the earliest financial and political backers of Hitler

SCHWERIN-KROSIGK, LUTZ, born 1887, "Foreign Minister" under Donitz

SEECKT, HANS, born 1866, creator and C-in-C of the *Reichswehr*.

SPENGLER, OSWALD, born 1880, Pan-German philosopher and writer.

STINNES, HUGO, 1870-1924, coal, steel and shipping magnate, newspaper owner, rightist-nationalist politician

STREICHER, JULIUS, born 1885, *Gauleiter* of Nuremberg, the *Frankenfuhrer*, owner and editor of the "Sturmer"

STRESEMANN, GUSTAV, 1878-1929, Foreign Minister in the Weimar Republic

THYSEN, FRITZ, born 1873, son and heir of August . . . , the founder of the greatest German steel concern, early supporter of Hitler, became Nazi *Staatsrat*, emigrated in the beginning of the war, was caught in France after her collapse and imprisoned in a concentration camp.

TREITSCHKE, HEINRICH VON, 1834-1896, professor, Pan-German historian.

WILHELM I, 1797-1888, King of Prussia and, since 1871, *Deutscher Kaiser*.

WILHELM II, 1859-1940, King of Prussia and *Deutscher Kaiser* 1888-1918.

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